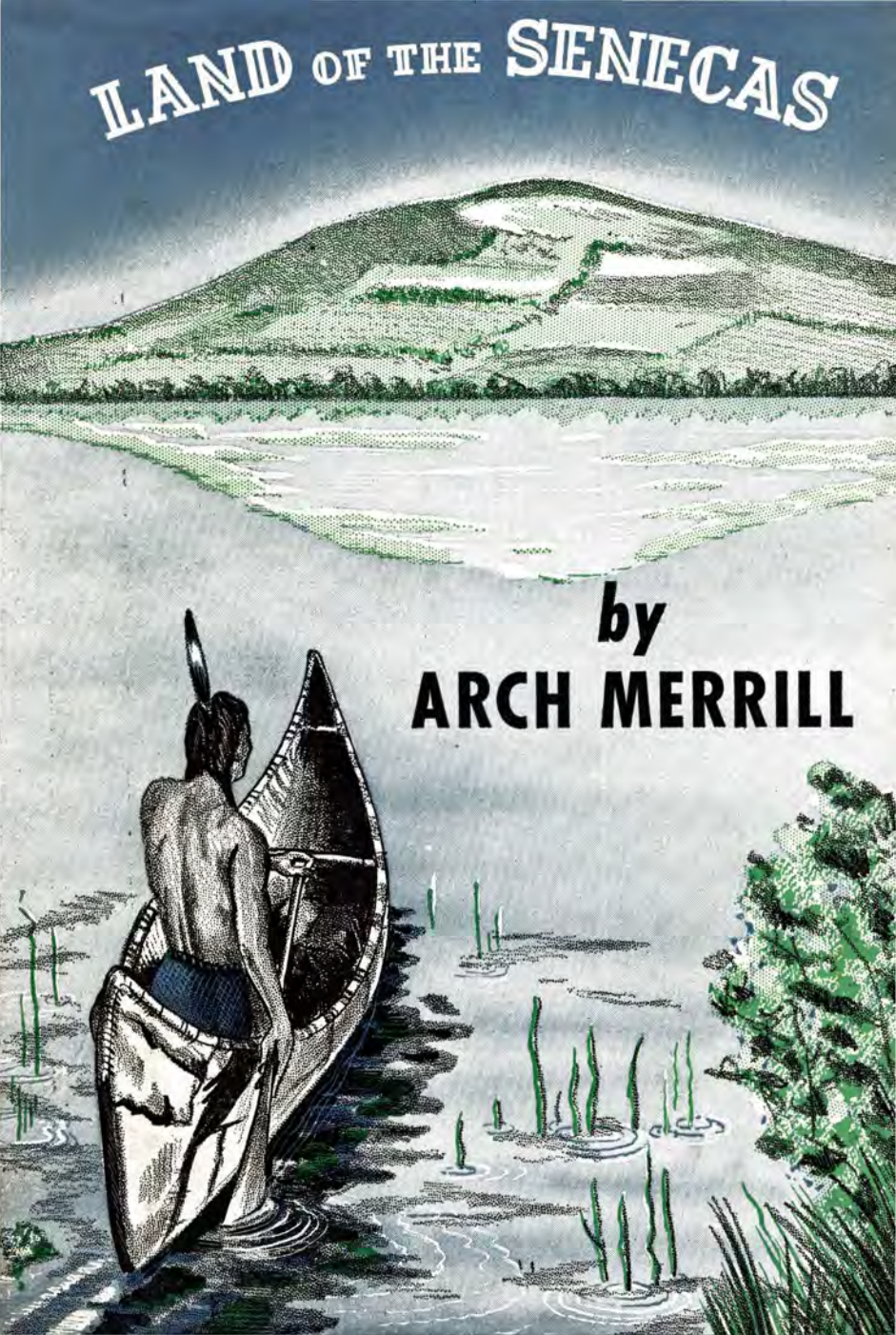
LAND OF THE SENECAS



by

ARCH MERRILL

The Saga of a People

"LAND OF THE SENECAS" is the eighth regional book from the pen of Arch Merrill, who has written himself into the hearts of thousands in Western New York. But this is more than just another book about a region of Western New York. This is the story of a people, the Seneca Indians, who once called all Western New York their own.

It is a story of their way of life, their religion, their legends, as well as the dramatic history of the proud "Keepers of the Western Door", the most populous and militant of the Six Nations of the Iroquois Long House.

The book takes the reader through a familiar countryside, to old Indian towns on the sites of many modern cities and villages; along old Indian trails that now are modern highways, beside the streams and lakes we know so well that were beloved of old by the Senecas. Arch Merrill, writing in his distinctive, lively style, brings out the Indian lore of nearly every community from the eastern hills above Seneca Lake to Niagara's "thunder water". He deals in sympathetic fashion with the present day problems of the Seneca Nation, huddled on reservations that are only a fraction of the vast domain that was their fathers'.

LAND OF THE SENECAS

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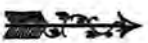

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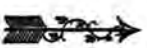

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To my wife, Katherine,
My Companion on So Many
Western New York Rambles

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LAND OF THE SENECAS

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Chapter 1

Keepers of the Western Door

"Give this country back to the Indians."

Sometimes we Western New Yorkers utter that cry. It is only when we suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous weather, such as 90 degree heat waves and three-day blizzards.

Of course we don't mean what we say on such rare occasions. At heart we are loyal to Western New York and are prompt to resent any slur cast upon our climate by "outsiders."

And we have no intention of giving Western New York "back to the Indians." Rest assured they would take it back pronto. For they loved it too and their hearts were broken when they had to give it up.

We seldom think of this land as old Indian country. We forget that virtually all of the present Empire State west of a line drawn southward from Sodus Bay to Tioga Point on the Susquehanna once was the realm of the Senecas, most numerous and militant of the Six Nations of the Iroquois. They were the Keepers of the Western Door of the Long House, the symbol of a great confederacy.

We have built many of our cities and villages on the sites of old Seneca towns. Often we have kept the old Indian

names. Yet only when the bulldozer of the builder, the plow of the farmer or the spade of the archeologist turns up some long buried bones, some pottery, pipes or other relics of an ancient culture do we think of this as the old land of the Senecas.

We drive our swift motor cars along paved highways that follow the narrow trails worn down by Seneca feet centuries ago. Our motor boats churn the same waters that were knifed by Seneca paddles in days of old. We hunt with modern firearms in the same woods where the Senecas stalked the wild beasts with bow and arrow.

We thrill to the beauty of this many-sided land, to its mighty hills, its lush valleys, its fruitful flatlands, its rib-bony lakes, its waterfalls, gorges, glens, caverns and rushing streams, its forests that are aflame with many colors in the autumn—and we forget that once all this land belonged to the Senecas and that they gloried in its beauty, too, and wove picturesque legends about it.

The Senecas have not forgotten. Huddled today on the three reservations alloted them, only a fragment of their once vast domain, they will never forget that Western New York was their homeland—before the white man came with his strange guns that spat death, his firewater that debauched the Indian character, his gauds and trinkets, his fine talk and his treaties that said "forever" but so often meant "until such time as we need the land."

The Indians stood in the path of the white man's empire-building march and the Indians had to give way. That was written in the stars from the moment the first European boot pressed down American earth and in their bones the

Indians knew it. They lost the Seneca homeland the same way they got it—through warfare.

* * *

It is true the Indians were not "progressive." They did not hack down the forests and build noisy, smoky cities. They did not harness the waters nor did they hide away the splendor of their waterfalls among ugly, grimy factories. They left the land much as the Creator, the Great Spirit, had molded it.

They did develop the land—after their fashion. And they made their contribution. Next time you relax in the after-dinner contentment of your cigar, pipe or cigaret, reflect that tobacco was unknown to the rest of the world until the white man came to America and found the Indians growing the weed. We can thank the red men too for corn, potatoes, squash, beans, peanuts, maple sugar and syrup and other food products, as well as the game of lacrosse.

The Iroquois had a culture, a religion and a code of laws long before the Europeans came. Their achievement in the realm of government seems almost incredible.

Here in the York State woods, probably before Columbus' time, a primitive people devised a central government not unlike our own Federal system. And the Iroquois United Nations worked.

For at least two centuries their League survived tribal wars, foreign influence and the advance of border civilization. The powers of Europe courted its favor. Of all the Indian nations the most feared were the Senecas, Keepers of the Western Door.

It is worthy of mention that long before Susan B. Anthony's time, women had the right to vote in the Iroquois councils.

The first Western New Yorkers were not paragons. They were cruel in war. They butchered and scalped and tortured their enemies. That was the only kind of warfare those forest people knew. But never did they even dream of so terrible an instrument of mass destruction as an atomic bomb.

In their villages of primitive bark lodges and log huts there dwelt a boundless hospitality and an admirable family life. A proud and sensitive people, the Senecas were dignified and reserved with strangers but jovial and sociable among their own. Whatever they had they shared with the less fortunate. They could not abide cowards, whimperers, traitors or liars.

* * *

The North American Indian is one of the riddles of the ages. No one knows whence he came or when or whether he is of one blood or the mixture of many races.

The Senecas were not the first Indians to roam these hills and vales. Before them were waves of migratory Algonkian tribes, among them a mound-building and an Eskimo-like people. Archeologists have uncovered many traces of their culture. Their fate is hidden in the mists of pre-historic time. Doubtless the Senecas annihilated or absorbed the last of them.

The dawn of recorded history, which is coincident with the coming of the white men to York State early in the 17th Century, found the Senecas occupying the region between the ridge west of Cayuga Lake and the Genesee River.

They were one of the Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy. The others were the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onondagas and the Cayugas. The sixth nation, the Tuscaroras, were fugitives from North Carolina and were not admitted to the League until 1721.

Whence came these Senecas to the land we now call Western New York? Dr. Arthur C. Parker, director emeritus of the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences, former state archeologist and an authority on the Iroquois (the blood of the Senecas flows in his veins), will be quoted often in these chapters.

Dr. Parker maintains that archeological evidence indicates the Senecas came from the South at an undetermined time, pushing over the hills to the Finger Lakes region. A hill near the head of Canandaigua Lake is the legendary birthplace of the Nation. The Senecas called themselves "The People of the Great Hill." They also were known as "The Men of Men"—with good reason.

For by the middle of the 17th Century when the Dutch, French and English were vying for control of the trade routes of the New World, the Senecas had, through conquest of their rivals, one by one, pushed their boundaries west across the Genesee to become masters of all of present Western New York. In reality their boundaries were limited only by their capacity for conquest. Their warriors ranged far and wide and struck terror to tribes living along the Illinois and in the far Carolinas.

Into the Seneca country the French priests carried the Cross and after them French armies came with the Sword. In 1687 an invading army under the Marquis Denonville de-

mistakable facial characteristics, they are no different than their neighbors.

More than most peoples, they have kept alive the traditions of their fathers. Many of them still observe the ancient rites of the Nation. Like their forefathers, the Keepers of the Western Door, they are guarded in their speech with strangers.

But one cannot escape the feeling that they have never forgotten that this was once the Land of the Senecas, Nunda-wah-ga-geh, domain of "The People of the Hill," and that, remembering some bitter experiences of their fathers, they regard every new legal maneuver of the white men with considerable suspicion.

Chapter 2

Names Upon the Land

"Ye say they all have passed away,
That noble race and brave,
That their light canoes have vanished
From off the crested wave;
That 'mid the forest where they roamed
There rings no hunter's shout;
But their name is on your waters,
Ye may not wash it out."

The Indians were "that noble race and brave" of which the Connecticut poetess, Lydia Huntley Sigourney, sang so many moons ago.

A century and a half has passed since the Senecas yielded their wilderness homeland to the conquering white man in the wake of the American Revolution but the old Indian names are still upon this Western New York.

Their names are on our waters and also on our counties, our towns, our streets, our parks. Newcomers to the region and tourists have difficulty with the pronunciation of some of our place names, such as Nunda, Oatka, Geneseo, Canaseraga. They are the old Indian names.

The Senecas were sensitive to all aspects of nature and their place names reflect in many instances the instinct for

the right descriptive word possessed by the unlettered children of the forest.

The white man has altered the old Indian names somewhat but in essence they are the ones the Keepers of the Western Door placed upon the land they loved so well.

There are names with a lilt to them, musical names like Canandaigua and Honeoye. There are names like the throb of a great organ, names like Irondequoit and Cattaraugus. There are names as crisp as the zing of an arrow through the air, names like Oatka and Gardeau.

* * *

"Their name is on your waters. Ye may not wash it out."

Their name is on the broad inland sea, Ontario, which means in the Indian tongue, "beautiful or pleasant lake."

The old Indian names are on the five slim and shining ribbons of water that beckon like graceful fingers to lovers of the beautiful—on Seneca, Canandaigua, Keuka, Cayuga and Skaneateles, York State's Finger Lakes in the heart of the onetime Iroquois empire.

On the 36 miles of cold, capricious water from whose vast depths strange thunder booms out like that of hidden cannon, the Senecas gave their own proud name. Today there is not only a Seneca Lake and a Seneca River but also a Seneca County, a village of Seneca Falls, a Seneca Park and a Seneca Parkway in Rochester as well as a busy Seneca Street in Buffalo and hotels named Seneca in Rochester and Geneva.

Yet the name Seneca is really foreign to the Nation that bears it. It appears first in history as an ancient Roman

family name, made famous by Lucius Annaeus Seneca, philosopher, writer of tragedies and counselor to the Emperor Nero. To the French the Senecas were "Sonnotuoans." The early Senecas called themselves the "People of the Hill." Dr. Arthur C. Parker traces the word, Seneca, to an Algonkian term, otsinika, meaning "stone." This was corrupted to Sinnaker, from which evolved the old Roman name, proudly borne by a people who because of their military prowess have been called "The Red Romans of the West."

"The Chosen Spot or Place" is the Indian meaning of the word Canandaigua, the name of the lovely lake above whose waters towers the hill that is the legendary birthplace of the Seneca Nation. It also was the name of the Indian village of log huts at the foot of the lake where now stands the white man's city that bears the old Indian name.

Keuka, the gentle Y-shaped waterway that the prosaic white settlers called Crooked Lake, is "canoe landing" in the Indian tongue.

Another larger, more turbulent Finger Lake, named after the Senecas' sister people, the Cayugas, has much the same meaning, "boat landing."

The fifth Finger Lake, far beyond the Eastern boundaries of the old Seneca realm, is Skaneateles, a name translated variously as "beautiful squaw" and "long lake."

The Seneca names are on all but one of the radiant "Little Finger Lakes" in the uplands south of Rochester. The name of Conesus, the lake whose shores today are lined with summer cottages, means "sheep berries." Hill-girt Honeoye means "finger lying" and was so named either because of

its shape or because a brave once lost a digit there. Sparkling Canadice, although it is the shortest of the upland lakes, is "long lake" in the Indian language. The white man's name is on the fourth lake, Hemlock, which unfolds like a slim blue banner between green slopes. To the Senecas it was Onehda, their word for hemlock.

Lake Lamoka, a gem set among rugged Schuyler County hills, means "set off by water," probably because its presence caused a detour in the old trail to Keuka.

The Indian names are on our bays that scallop the southern shore of Lake Ontario. Irondequoit Bay was the great port of the Senecas in their days of glory. That sonorous name, which had many spellings and was on world maps in the 17th Century, means "where the lake turns aside." The port of the Cayugas was Sodus Bay, one of the finest inland harbors anywhere. Sodus, according to one of several versions, means "knife." Another more picturesque translation is "silver waters."

* * *

"Ye say their cone-like cabins
That clustered o'er the vale,
Have fled like withered leaves
Before the autumn's gale;
But their memory liveth on your hills,
Their baptism on your shore;
Your everlasting rivers speak
Their dialect of yore."

Poetess Sigourney was right. The old Indian names are on our "everlasting rivers" and also on the smaller streams

on whose banks the Senecas built their towns and made their campfires, the rushing streams that were to turn the mill wheels of the white pioneers, the streams that were highways for the Indian canoes and the settlers' clumsier craft in the early time.

The Genesee, a major waterway of the Seneca Nation although it is studded with mighty falls, bears an Indian name which aptly means "pleasant banks" or "pleasant valley." Geneseo is another form of the same Indian word, Chenusio.

The Allegheny, which winds today through one of the Reservations that are the last ramparts of a scattered people, was to the Indians "the long river."

Romanticists like to believe that Niagara means "thunder water" because of the majesty of the falls but more realistic historians have concluded that the word denotes "the neck," referring to the Niagara peninsula which was the stronghold of the Neuter Nation before the Senecas liquidated that peace-loving people.

Aptly the Indians named the Tonawanda, "swift water" and the Oatka "through the opening." Meaning of the Ganargua, called by the white man plain Mud Creek, is more obscure. It denotes "where the town sprang up." On its banks near the present East Bloomfield was one of the early Seneca towns destroyed by Denonville in 1687.

Other streams whose names are like liquid music are the Canaseraga, which means "among the milkweeds"; the Canacedea, "burnt house"; the Canisteo, "pole in the water"; the Conhocton, "log on the water."

No place name is more significant than Nunda, the vil-

lage that nestles in the shadow of towering ranges. Its Indian meaning is "where the hills come together." Gardeau, along the gray-walled river canyon known as the High Banks where Mary Jemison, the White Woman of the Genesee, once tilled her many acres, means "the bank before it."

Truly "their memory liveth on our hills."

The southernmost Seneca town on the Genesee was Caneadea and the Indian name clings to the present nearby village and huge storage dam of the Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation. Caneadea to the red man was "where the heavens rest upon the earth" and got its name from the extensive openings in the forest there.

Canawaugus, where once stood an important Seneca village, means "ill smelling water" because of the nearby mineral springs known to the tribal medicine men and converted by the white man into the once famous Avon Spa. Cattaraugus, a Seneca word perpetuated in the name of a county, a village and a stream, has much the same unlovely meaning "foul-smelling banks."

The site of Rochester had a sonorous Indian name, Casconchiagon, "the place of many falls."

The name of the sixth Nation of the Iroquois confederacy, Tuscarora, lives in a hamlet in the Livingston County hills. The name signifies "the wearers of the shirt." Kanona, in a deep valley of the Southern Tier, means "water basin"; Kashong, "fallen limb"; Gowanda on the banks of the Cattaraugus, "below the cliffs" and Cheektowaga, populous Buffalo suburb, "the crab apple place." And there's a place called Kill Buck on the Allegany Reservation.

On the counties of the white man's Empire State that

once was the red man's forest empire still stand the old Indian names. Erie is the name of a great lake as well as a New York State county and a canal and a Pennsylvania city and county, all stemming from the tribe whose name meant "long tailed." The Eries, "The Cat People," ruled the territory along the lake that bears their name—until the Senecas conquered them and gobbled up their domain.

Chautauqua means "where the fish were taken out" and Chemung, "the big horn." The unimaginative white pioneers gave to Wyoming, a county set among hills, the Indian name that means "great flats," a name borrowed from an earlier-settled Pennsylvania region.

Call the roll of the York State counties and the Indian names are there: Genesee, Niagara, Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Ontario, Oswego, Otsego, Tioga, Allegany, Chenango—most of them in the central and western parts of the state.

The pioneers were seemingly loath to fasten the names of the Seneca chiefs, Red Jacket, Cornplanter, Handsome Lake and the rest, upon their settlements in the Genesee Country. An exception is Montour Falls, the village of the tumbling waters, whose name perpetuates the celebrated Montour family of "queens" and warriors, whose Indian blood was diluted with French. Catherine's Creek winds through that picturesque village and it is named after "French Catherine" Montour. For years it bore the white man's name of Havana. There's an Indian Falls in Genesee County where the Tonawanda Creek splashes over a rocky ledge. Little Beard's Creek flows through the land where that chieftain ruled in the Cuylerville-Leicester area.

And there is the roaring, gusty city by the great lake with the aptly dynamic name of Buffalo, which, while not of direct Indian origin, certainly has an Indian connotation.

* * *

There are all sorts of names upon this land—names of long dead statesmen, warriors, land owners, pioneers; names of faraway Old World places, some of which Western New Yorkers mispronounce. There are names borrowed from New England whence so many of the settlers came. There are descriptive names like Wheatland, Fruitland, Vine Valley, Fairport, Springwater, Hemlock, Waterport, Pleasant Valley, Cold Water, Lakeville, Silver Springs, Great Valley, Little Valley, Springville and many more.

There are such names as Friendship, Amity, Freedom, Protection and Bliss and a Red House on the Allegany Indian Reservation.

But the most picturesque place names are the ones given long ago by the Senecas, names that roll off the tongue like liquid music, names like Canandaigua, Tonawanda, Ontario, Honeoye.

In the familiar place names still lives a little remnant of the ancient glory of the Keepers of the Western Door.

Chapter 3

Long, Long Trails

Across the Empire State stretches the high road called New York State 5, linking the white man's cities, carrying the white man's motor swarm.

Along its 306 miles, from the Hudson to the Niagara stand many a bustling city, many a pleasant village in the historic Upstate land.

That modern highway across the state follows for most of its course a trail nobody knows how old. In the beginning it was cut out by the hooves of the migratory beasts that followed the waterways, seeking feeding grounds in the forest openings, the cool springs and the salt licks. Then in a prehistoric time wandering Indian peoples came, from whence no one knows, and they followed the path the animals had made for them.

When history dawned, generations of moccasined feet, marching single file, had worn it deep. But it was a narrow path, only 12 to 18 inches wide, that ran most of the way through the overhanging forest, where on trees blazed by Indian hatchets were symbols only the Indians understood.

In that distant time when the Iroquois were the monarchs of all they surveyed, it was an important highway, even as it is today. For it passed through the domains of the five great Nations, the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onondagas, the

Cayugas and the Senecas who guarded the Western Door.

Then as now, it connected the principal towns, those along the Mohawk, in the Onondaga Valley, in the Finger Lakes country where stood Kanadesaga, near the present Geneva, and the Kanandague of the Indians. It swung through the Genesee Valley, past the Big Spring at Caledonia and that other favorite camping place, the great bend of the Tonawanda where the smoke of industrial Batavia rises today.

It was the Great Central Trail of the Iroquois and it led to the capitol of their United Nations, the Long House on the shore of Onondaga Lake where the sachems sat before the council fire and administered the Great Law of the League of Hiawatha. Down that road came the emissaries of tribes, that were not of the League, some from far places, courting the favor of the powerful Iroquois.

Often the trail became a war path and over it filed with stealthy tread the fighting men of the Confederacy, once the greatest military force on the continent. It knew also the flying feet of the Indian couriers, who could cover 100 miles in a day.

In time the old trail came to know the rough imprint of the white man's boot where only moccasined feet had gone before. Down the Indian road passed the whole colorful cavalcade of colonial history—the French priests, traders, explorers, adventurers and the English and the Dutch. Many came to woo the leaders of the Iroquois who controlled the major trade routes of the New World, a glittering prize in the world checker game of empire which France and England played.

Then after the Revolutionary War which cost the Iroquois

Nations most of their homeland, the wagons of the pioneers rumbled down the old Indian trail and it was widened that they might pass. In the War of 1812, when the old western gate of the Senecas became a battle ground, down the historic road came soldiers, military wagons and panic-stricken refugees fleeing eastward after the British had burned Buffalo.

Then the stage coaches lumbered down the turnpike and the covered wagons in the march of a pioneering people toward the setting sun and new frontiers.

And now the Great Central Trail of the Iroquois, the narrow, ageless path through the forest, is the busy motor road that reaches across the Empire State. History haunts its every mile.

* * *

The Great Central Trail was only one of a great spider web of crude Indian highways that spread out across the old land of the Senecas, the Western New York of today.

Usually they followed the waterways and joined other trails to distant places on the continent. The Senecas, who ranged far and wide in their days of conquest, knew them all.

Ironically, twice in history the white men's armies, one marching under the flag of France and the other under the starry banner of the Thirteen Colonies, used the Senecas' trails to invade and despoil the Senecas' country. And today many of the white man's highways follow the route of the Indian trails.

Irondequoit Bay was the great port of the Senecas and a gateway to the homeland of the Nation. From it and Indian

The high falls at Rochester have always been an effectual bar to full scale navigation on the Genesee and the Indians had a portage trail from Irondequoit Bay to the river in what is now Genesee Valley Park. Over that narrow woodland trail the red men carried their bark canoes, from the bayside, across the present Mercy High School grounds in Blossom Rd., to Cobbs Hill and to the river near the mouth of Red Creek.

Two trails led southward out of Rochester on either side of the Genesee. The East Side path started at the ford near the canal aqueduct and followed the river to Big Kettle's Town, an Indian village near Mount Morris, where the trails branched off. Two of them wound along either side of the Canaseraga to the Seneca village set among towering hills that today is the village of Dansville. They became part of the system of roads that crisscrossed the southern hills to join the Great Southern Trail.

The West Side trail followed the Genesee from Rochester to the Indian settlement of Oatka near Scottsville, thence to Canawaugus where many an ailing brave stopped at the healing waters of the sulphur springs; to Big Tree near Geneseo, to Little Beard's Town near Cuylerville, and to Squawkie Hill, the Seneca town at the northern end of the High Banks of the Genesee.

Then the moccasined feet followed the river through the scenic wonderland that is now Letchworth State Park to Caneadea, the southernmost Seneca village on the Genesee and to the site of Belfast where the trail swung off along Black and Olean Creeks, past the famous Oil Spring near Cuba to a portage that connected with the Allegheny River.

To the Indians the Allegheny was the Ohio in early times and this important highway was known as the Ohio Trail.

Over the old Indian trails in 1779 marched the army of General John Sullivan to destroy the Seneca villages and crops and curb the Seneca power. The colonial soldiers, tattered, hungry and worn, dragged their cannon and drove their horses and cattle from Tioga to the site of Elmira, past the Finger Lakes, over the hills around the smaller upland lakes to the lush valley of the Genesee.

Nature built a road for the Red Men along Lake Ontario's shore, between those two key points of war and trade, Oswego and Niagara. We call that highway the Ridge Road or just "The Ridge," and it was built eons ago, the scientists say, by the waves of a glacial lake. The Indians called it the Ontario Trail and it was a favorite route for the hunters, trappers, fishermen and warriors of the tribes.

A smaller trail from the mouth of the Oak Orchard to the great bend of the Tonawanda intersected it and Albion's Main Street today follows that old Indian road.

In the land of the thunder water that we know as the Niagara Frontier were many trails to Canada and the northwestern lands of the Hurons. From the mighty Niagara Falls to Lewiston on the river was a famous portage trail.

In Erie, Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties, the feet of three Indian nations, the Neutrals, the Eries and the Senecas, followed the network of trails. They led from the mother town of the Neutrals at Lewiston along Lake Erie's shores to the land of the "People of the Cat" and along the fertile valley of the Cattaraugus and through the wild hills along the Allegheny.

So extensive was the network of crude Indian trails that there is hardly a community in Western New York that did not lie on or near one of them.

* * *

Along the gorge of the Genesee in Rochester are still vestiges of old paths that the Indians made when they fished and hunted on both sides of the Genesee. Generations of boys have risked life and limb to follow those paths along the steep river canyon.

One Rochester boy never forgot that playground of his youth, even after he won literary renown in New York. His name was Rossiter Johnson and in the early days of this century, he penned this verse:

"In days agone where rocky cliffs
Rise far above the river's vale,
There was a path of doubts and ifs—
We called it then the Indian Trail.

Beyond the age of childish joy,
Before the age of gun and sail,
The fearless and elastic boy
Alone could use the Indian Trail.

Life lends such comfort as it hath,
But labor wears and custom stales;
I plod all day the White Man's Path
And dream at night of Indian Trails."

Seneca Corn Harvest at High Banks of the Genesee Near Mount Morris—From Exhibit in State Museum in Albany.

Seneca Hunter Group at Canandaigua Lake, Birthplace of the Nation—From Exhibit in State Museum in Albany.

Chapter 4

"Castles" in the Woods

"Our clustering cities and villages are on the sites of their ancient castles, forts and places of burial."
From Turner's "History of the Phelps and Gorham Purchase."

You can't travel many miles in Western New York without running across an old stamping ground of the Indians.

But generally there's nothing to tell you that centuries ago a particular spot was one of "their ancient castles, forts or places of burial." (A "castle" meant merely a sizeable Indian town.) Here and there a marker tells the traveler he is passing a historic Indian site.

There are many other sites, unmarked and known to few save the archeologist and the historian, that tell of archaic peoples and a prehistoric time. There are mounds and embankments so old that when the first white settlers came, the Senecas told them they knew not what people had built them. From the relics found in such sites the men of science are able to determine what sort of people lived here and to piece together something of the mystery of the past.

They have traced three waves of wandering Algonkians, along with a mound-building and an Eskimo-like people as

the first Western New Yorkers before the Senecas, of Iroquoian stock and deadly foes of the Algonkians, took over.

The first group, nomadic hunters and fishermen, left behind some crude implements of bone and stone, large clumsy spears, rough pottery, a few grooved axes but no graves.

The second group were workers in bone and stone, made crude pottery, subsisted on wild vegetable food and dwelt in large encampments, usually along waterways. Strangely enough two Western New York colleges stand on their ancient village sites, the University of Rochester's River Campus and Keuka College. Other sites are scattered over the Finger Lakes area and around Rochester, in Mendon Ponds, Ellison, Durand-Eastman and Maplewood Parks and the hills overlooking Irondequoit Bay.

The third Algonkian group were tillers of the soil, as well as hunters and fishermen, and they grew corn, beans, squash and tobacco around villages usually built on lowlands along waterways. Remains of their culture, such as ceremonial stones, copper and bone implements and clay pottery, have turned up in many places, among them along the Genesee gorge in Rochester, around Irondequoit Bay and Long Pond; at Golah and other places in the Town of Rush; at Fall Brook near Geneseo; in the Canandaigua area and at "the ghost town" of St. Helena beside the Genesee south of Letchworth State Park.

Down from the North at some undetermined time swept an Eskimo-like people who left behind semi-lunar knives of slate and bone as evidence of their tenancy. The mound builders left more definite traces. They raised corn and other vegetables and they made hand-woven fabrics and grooved

axes, shell beads, bone and antler implements and pottery. Their villages were most numerous in the western counties of Cattaraugus, Chautauqua and Erie, as well as in Vine Valley near Canandaigua Lake and at Squawkie Hill near Mount Morris.

Then, some time before Columbus, a people, more resourceful and vigorous than their predecessors, came pushing over the Southern hills to the Canandaigua Lake region to become the eventual masters of Western New York. They were the Senecas.

At first they built their villages of rectangular, communal bark lodges on hills with stockades and entrenchments and away from major waterways. For they were on constant guard against attack from potential enemies who surrounded them: The Hurons, between the Georgian Bay and the St. Lawrence and along Lake Ontario's northern shore; the Neutral Nation on both sides of the Niagara River; the Eries along the lake of that name and the Allegheny River and the Andastes along the upper Susquehanna.

The beginning of the historic period found the Senecas in two divisions, one living northwest of Canandaigua Lake and the other in the Honeoye Valley-Lima area.

Boughton Hill today is only a quiet crossroad on a hilltop one mile south of Victor but once it was Gannagaro, the "Babylon of the Senecas," the principal town of the eastern group of the Nation. Three miles to the south was Gandougarie along Mud Creek in the present township of East Bloomfield, the "concentration camp" to which the Senecas brought their captives.

Only the shriek of the locomotives and the rumble of the

Lehigh Valley trains break the sylvan silence of the Honeoye Valley at Rochester Junction today but once there stood a major Indian community, Totiakton, capital of the western Senecas. Their other village was Gannounata or Keonthe, about two miles north of Lima along the route of the old electric line to Honeoye Falls.

Those were the strongholds of the Senecas after they had become a united nation of the Iroquois League and had conquered all their tribal adversaries, one by one. At each village the Jesuits established a mission.

Those were the four towns destroyed by Denonville in 1687. They were never rebuilt.

In 1677 a Dutch trader, Wentworth Greenhalgh, set out from Albany with a party on horseback and visited the four Seneca towns. Here is how he described them:

"Canagaro (Boughton Hill) and Totiakton (Rochester Junction) lie within 30 miles of Lake Frontenac (Ontario) and ye other two lie about 4 or 5 miles to the southward of these. They have abundance of corn. None of these towns are stockaded.

"Canagaro lies on the top of a great hill and contains 150 houses. Here the Indians were very desirous to see us ride our horses and they made great feasts and dancing and invited us when ye maides were together. Both wee and our Indians might choose such as we liked to ly with.

"Totiakton lies on the brinke of a hill, has not much cleared ground and is near the river (Honeoye Creek) which means 'bending.' It . . . contains about 120 houses, being ye largest of all houses we saw, ye ordinary being 50 or 60 feet long with 12 or 13 fires in one house.

"Being at the place the 17th of June there came 50 prisoners from the southwestward. They were of two nations . . . of them was burnt two women and a man and a child killed with a stone. At night we heard a great noise as if ye houses had all fallen but it was only ye inhabitants driving away ye ghosts of ye murdered.

"The 18th, going to Canagaro, we overtook ye prisoners. When the soldiers saw us they stopped each his prisoner and made him sing and cut off their fingers and slashed their bodies with a knife and when they had sung, each man confessed how many men in his time he had killed. That day at Canagaro there was most cruelly burnt four men, four women and a boy."

And that is ye not so pretty picture of yon times in ye Seneca towns.

* * *

After the French invasion the Senecas built new towns, mostly around the Finger Lakes and along the Genesee. The white man introduced the axe and log houses supplanted the long bark lodges and the new towns were not fortified. The Senecas now felt secure. At the time of the Revolution, some of the Indian houses were built of boards and a few were painted.

Most of their important towns were destroyed by the Yankee general, Sullivan, in 1779 as the American army drove northward into the heartland of the Senecas after routing the Indians and their Tory allies at Newtown near the present Elmira.

Sullivan put to the torch the villages along the slim blue lakes: French Catherine's Town (Montour Falls) where lived

"Queen" Catherine Montour, beside the tumbling waters; Kendaia on Seneca's shore; Skoi-yase on the site of Waterloo, and the important town of Kanadesaga, near the present State Agricultural Station on the outskirts of Geneva. There Sullivan burned 50 well built houses and the stockade, barracks and storehouse that Sir William Johnson and the Tory Butlers of the Mohawk Valley had built. There was the headquarters of the British in the Seneca country and there also was the residence of a Seneca "king," known as "Old Smoke," a mighty warrior who had led his Senecas to massacre in the Wyoming Valley.

Then Kanandague, near the foot of Canandaigua Lake, "The Chosen Place" of the Senecas, a settlement of 23 houses, the finest Sullivan's men had seen, was leveled. Thence the invaders marched over the hills to destroy the 15 or 20 houses on the flats at Honeoye. A village near the head of Conesus Lake fell before the American army reached its final objective, the great "Genesee Castle," Little Beard's Town on the river near Cuylerville. It was described as having "128 houses, mostly large and elegant." There also tremendous stores of corn and other crops were burned.

Some Seneca places not on Sullivan's calling list were spared and after the Revolution, a few new villages sprang up, notably the one on Buffalo Creek, a "blanket village" of 1,500 inhabitants, mostly refugees from the Sullivan "blitz." It was two and one half miles from the mouth of Buffalo Creek and today is part of the South Side of the roaring city of Buffalo, the Seneca Street-Abbott Road sector. In 1795 the French Duke de Liancourt visited the site of Buffalo and found "scarcely one house without a person indisposed with

the ague. We found ourselves here surrounded by Indians . . . the banks are crowded with places where the Indians dry the fish they catch in Lake Erie."

* * *

This countryside is dotted with old Indian sites, more than 1,000 of them in all.

Virtually every township in Monroe County has yielded some trace of Indian occupation. In the Honeoye Valley region, besides the town at Rochester Junction, were a later village near Dann's Corners and many sites in the Town of Rush. In Rochester the occupation seems to have been entirely Algonkian. The Senecas never built at the dismal swamp beside the great falls of the Genesee that barred the passage of their war canoes to Lake Ontario. For them the site of Rochester was only an overnight camping site, a place for occasional hunting and fishing. They reared their towns farther inland.

Livingston County and "The Pleasant Valley" of the Genesee formed the heartland of the Senecas in their great days. Besides Little Beard's Town and the village near Lima destroyed by the French, nearly 150 sites have been located in that county.

On the west side of the Genesee, nearly opposite the Avon sulphur springs whose healing properties were venerated by the Senecas of old, and on the Great Central and the Genesee Trails was the important community of Canawaugus. Once it housed 1,000 Senecas. There the chief, Cornplanter, and his half brother, Handsome Lake, the reformer, were born.

At the Big Spring where Caledonia stands today was an Indian town that was a favorite stopping place on the Great Trail. It saw in its time the glow of many camp fires, even after the Senecas abandoned it. Retreating Indians and British after the Sullivan campaign stopped there on their way to a refuge at Fort Niagara.

After the Revolution the Oneidas had a village along the Genesee, north of Avon, near the historic Markham estate on the River Road.

Near Geneseo on the west side of the river was Big Tree, the home of a chief of that name and of a giant oak. There in 1797 a famous treaty was made. There was another Indian village on the site of Geneseo, one near the white man's "lost city" of Williamsburg on the road to Mount Morris and a modern town on the site of East Avon.

In the Mount Morris vicinity were Big Kettle's Town and Squawkie Hill at the northern end of the High Banks of the Genesee, historic in Algonkian and mound-building eras, as well as in Seneca times.

Lima was the site of an 18th Century town called Skahase-gao, which means "long creek." It was a stopping place on the Great Trail between the Big Spring and Kandesaga. In the Town of Livonia on the Lima road is a 16-acre earth enclosure on a hill which sheltered some beleaguered people in an ancient time.

In the shelter of towering hills the Indians built their towns, near the present Nunda; along the High Banks at Gardeau and on the site of Dansville the relatively modern Seneca village of Ganosgano. The first settlers found a few

remaining huts and an Indian cemetery in what is now the heart of that brisk, hill-girt community.

Ontario, the mother of the counties of the white man's Western New York and the traditional birthplace of the Senecas, has been a rich field for the archeologist, who has found relics of many cultures there. There were early sites in the Bristols, remains of an ancient fort in the Town of Richmond, villages at Factory Hollow, Naples and Manchester, besides the ones described earlier in this chapter.

The charm of the Finger Lakes region captured the hearts of the Indians and their villages and burial places were many in that lovely land, around Bluff Point, Glenora, Rock Stream and Watkins Glen, to name a few places. An archaic people dwelt around Lake Lamoka and the other little lakes in the hills around Wayne and Tyrone.

The mighty hills of Wyoming County made that a land of passage rather than one of settlement although there were Indian sites near the headwaters of the Oatka, around Warsaw; a hilltop stronghold south of Portageville and others in the Castile, Perry, Java and Arcade sectors. There was a fishing village on the Silver Lake outlet to which Mary Jemison, "The White Woman," repaired after the Sullivan raid on Little Beard's Town, saying she "was too tired to go farther" and that she "was not afraid of any white men."

On the west side of the Genesee in northern Allegany County stood Caneadea, the southernmost village of the Senecas on the upper river. It was nearly opposite the present hilltop campus of Houghton College. The Indian village

was built in 1780 by British troops sent out from Fort Niagara and after the Revolution it became part of the Caneadea Reservation, which the Senecas sold and abandoned in 1826. A log house, the last Indian dwelling place on the upper Genesee, once the abode of a chief, John Hudson, was on the site of the old reservation near Wiscoy until it was blown down in 1892. At Caneadea was the log council house, which has been preserved and was moved to Letchworth State Park in 1871. Today thousands visit the last council house of the Seneca Nation, near the statue of Mary Jemison and the Museum in the park that contains so many Indian relics.

That council house, in Letchworth Park, once called Portage because it was the carrying place for the war canoes, was the scene of a notable gathering in 1872. It was "the last council" of the Nations.

An old rift, going back to the War of 1812 when the Mohawks who had fled to Canada and the Senecas took opposite sides, was healed when a descendant of Joseph Brant shook hands with a descendant of Red Jacket. Present also were descendants of Cornplanter and of Mary Jemison, along with such distinguished whites as Millard Fillmore, former president of the United States, and William Pryor Letchworth, who that day was adopted into the tribe under the name of "Hai-wai-ge-is-tah," which to the Indians meant "the man who does the right thing."

The whole company sat on low benches around the council fire which burned on the clay floor. In the olden time they would have sat on the floor.

Sites have been uncovered in Allegany County as far

south as Wellsville and near the site of the college town of Alfred. There are evidences of Algonkian occupation near Transit Bridge and Belfast.

West of the Genesee were the domains of the Eries and of the Neutral Nation. Near Oakfield in Genesee County is a great earth-walled circle, an oval 600 feet by 800, with five gateways, deep outer ditches and evidences of palisades that intrigues archeologists.

At the confluence of the Oatka and Fordham Brook, three miles north of Le Roy, on a hill bordered by deep ravines was an aboriginal fortress that has yielded many relics. There are other sites along the Oatka and the Tonawanda that tell of occupation by Algonkians, mound-builders and Neutrals. Batavia at the great bend of the Tonawanda and the union of many trails was a favorite camp site.

Near Shelby Center is a notable circular fortification, probably built by the Neutrals. There are also traces of their occupation along the Oak Orchard Creek and a village site at Lyndonville, besides mounds in the Town of Carlton.

In Niagara County was the capital of the Neutral Nation, on the limestone escarpment above Lewiston at the edge of the present reservation of the Tuscaroras. On both sides of the Niagara River have been found many relics of the peace-loving people who were vanquished by the Senecas four centuries ago.

Erie County was the stamping ground of many shifting peoples, of the Algonkians, the Eskimo-like tribes, the Eries and the Neutrals before the Seneca conquest. Along Lake Erie's shores and Buffalo Creek and in the fertile valley of the Cattaraugus are evidences of scores of camps and villages.

The reservation village of Buffalo Creek, where in their last days lived the silver-tongued Red Jacket and the fabulous White Woman, Mary Jemison, was begun in 1780 on the site of an ancient village. The town of West Seneca was all Indian in population until 1828 when the missionary, the Rev. Asher Wright, started the first white settlement. In Buffalo, the metropolis that is the gateway to the West, the Indian tradition lives in the names of many of the principal streets, like Seneca, Mohawk and Chippewa. And there also is an Indian Church Road.

* * *

There's no longer a Painted Post, striped red and white at the junction of two trails, but there's a village of that name in Steuben County hard by the Pennsylvania line.

And today at the junction of two highways in the Guyanoga Valley south of Penn Yan stands an Indian chief of tin, a familiar landmark in the lakes country. That brave figure, representing a perhaps mythical chief named Guyanoga, came from the prow of an old steamboat on Lake Keuka.

On farm meadows and hillsides and in the heart of busy cities the relics of the first Western New Yorkers keep cropping up.

And there are descendants of the pioneers who tamed the old Indian land who still cherish the traditions of the past, as witness this excerpt from a letter written in the precise hand and the precise phraseology of an older generation. It came from Mrs. Augustus Luscher who lives in the northeastern part of the Town of Leroy:

"A Seneca village is said to have been situated on a hill

near the old homestead where I came to live in 1883. There is a tradition that on a certain spot on the hill, the soil is darker than the surrounding ground. This is supposed to be the place where the Seneca campfire burned."

So you see, the Keepers of the Western Door left their mark upon the land, even unto this Age of the Atom and the Atlantic Pact.

Chapter 5

Life in the Lodges

"Round about the Indian village
Spread the meadows and the corn fields,
And beyond them stood the forest."
From "The Song of Hiawatha"

In 17th Century villages of the Senecas, such as the ones at Boughton Hill and Rochester Junction, also stood the first apartment houses in Western New York.

They were rectangular lodges, built of poles and small tree trunks and covered with bark. They were 12 to 18 feet high, about 16 feet wide and from 50 to 200 feet long. They housed several families whose women were all of the same clan.

The houses were not in rows and there was no orderly street layout. Nearby were the communal village gardens where grew corn, beans, squash, pumpkins, melons and tobacco.

In the bark "long houses" the fires of the several families smoked at intervals along a central hallway. There were no chimneys. The smoke escaped through holes in the roof. Opening and closing of the doors of either end of the windowless "apartment house" regulated the draft. Along either

side of the big common room were long bunks arranged like the berths of a railroad sleeping car. The lower bunks, covered with bark and skins, were used as seats during the day and the upper ones for storing dishes, pelts and other miscellany. There were no tables or chairs. In fact there were no "modern conveniences."

Lockwood L. Doty in his "History of Livingston County" describes the interior of a Seneca home as "noxious with smoke, with members of the household lounging on the dirt floor, neither neat nor admitting of privacy. On soot-smeared poles high in the hut hung a motley collection of clothing, corn, skins of animals, dried pumpkins and squashes, along with weapons and ornaments."

Doty added that "Indian women never washed their hands. They would boil corn and venison together. Deer was skinned, cut up and cast into a kettle, flesh, bones, entrails and all. When serving hominy, one spoon served for all in turn. The host would take the spoon, and after wiping it on the sole of his moccasin, pass it on to the guests." Emily Post would not have approved and neither did some of the fastidious Frenchmen who dined in the Seneca lodges in the early time.

But contrary to Doty's account which he obtained from early settlers, many white visitors to Indian homes reported them to be spick and span. It is difficult to generalize about a whole people. Besides, the Indians liked to play jokes on their white guests. The incident of the wiping of the passed-around spoon on the moccasin may have been to shock the visitor, for most Senecas had their own cup and spoon.

An eminent ethnologist recalls that Dr. Peter Wilson, a

Cayuga chief, was invited in the 1850s to dine in the home of a Washington lady. His hostess served him on the floor as if he were used to eating there. Dr. Wilson smilingly went along with the game. He threw his bones over his shoulder, saying: "Me savage—ugh—me eat 'em on ground —throw bones over shoulder." Yet he was a physician and a graduate of Dartmouth College. Early Indians were like that also and the visitor who was too inquiring was given what he expected. The Indians had a sly sense of humor.

The Seneca diet was wholesome but a bit monotonous. Corn was the staple food. The Indians cultivated several varieties. Maybe there was a Henry Wallace among them. They made corn soup, corn bread, corn pudding, gruel, hominy, samp and they mixed corn foods with beans and berries and with sunflower and nut oils. Succotash was an Indian creation. Ground nuts and wild fruit supplemented the corn-beans-squash diet.

And of course there were venison, bear meat, wild fowl and fish in which the land of the Senecas abounded. Hunting and fishing was not just sport to the Indians. It was mighty serious business and bringing in the carcasses of large game was often a prodigious task.

The Senecas made tea from the tips of hemlock boughs boiled in water and seasoned it with maple sugar. They also had a tea made of boiled maple sap and seasoned with sassafras root and some wild spice. For men away on the warpath and the hunt, the rations were charred corn, parched and pounded into fine flour and mixed with maple sugar, easily carried in a bear-skin pouch.

In the Spring the men cleared and burned off the garden

site. The women did the planting, cultivating and harvesting. They worked under the direction of a field matron and the monotony of the day's toil was broken by rest periods and music. It took modern industrialists a long time to take that leaf from the Indian book.

The Indians extracted the oil from sunflower seeds and used it as butter. They gathered wild leeks, pond lily roots, artichokes, cattail roots, mushrooms, nuts and berries for food and herbs for medicine. There was some wild fruit but the orchards that Sullivan's men destroyed around the Seneca villages in 1779 came from seeds brought by Europeans.

Crops were stored in pits dug in the ground and roofed with bark. Cured venison and other meats also were buried in pits lined with deer skins. The Senecas drove no wells but relied on springs and streams for their water supply.

Game conservation is nothing new. The Senecas practiced it. In certain seasons all females of a particular animal species were spared and woe unto the hunter who violated the rule. Organized hunting parties left the villages in the Fall, often for far points, and came home in time for the big midwinter New Year festival. The Indians devised traps for deer and bear and spread nets for quail and other fowl. They built brush fences to round up whole herds of deer and sometimes took 100 in a single kill. They would trail a bear for hours to tire the beast and make him an easier prey. Trapping was important in their economy, as well as to the French, the English and the Dutch who sought to control the fur trade and the water routes of the New World.

All products of the fields and the chase were shared in common by the Senecas. There was no hunger, no destitution,

no orphanages, no homes for the aged in the Indian state. They took care of their own.

After breakfast there was no regular meal time. When her lord and master stalked in, unheralded, at any hour of the day, the Seneca wife's first duty was to set food before him. Seneca homes were never locked. When anyone entered a dwelling, whether he be friend, stranger or hated enemy, he was served food immediately. To refuse was an insulting discourtesy. After white settlement, pioneers were astonished to awaken and find several Indians sleeping on the floor of their cabins. The Indian homes were always open to the wayfarer and the Indian thought the white man practiced the same code of hospitality.

They learned differently. A Seneca chief thus voiced his disillusionment to a white trader many years ago: "You know our practice. If a white man is traveling through our country and enters one of our cabins, we all treat him as I do you. We dry him if he is wet. We warm him if he is cold and give him meat and drink if he is hungry and thirsty. We spread soft furs for him to rest and sleep on. We demand nothing in return. But when I go to a white man's house in Albany and ask him for victuals and drink, he says 'Where is your money?' and if I have none, he says 'Get out, you Indian dog.' "

* * *

The Western New York climate is a challenging one and always has bred a hardy people. That is particularly true of the first Western New Yorkers, the Indians, who were hardened by their outdoor life.

The Senecas were not a race of giants. In fact they were generally of average height but their erect posture made them seem taller. Their hands and feet were smaller than those of Europeans. They possessed a wiry strength and a cat-like grace and agility of movement, besides an enormous capacity for enduring pain and fatigue. The white captive who could successfully run their gauntlet of cruel whips, clubs and missiles held their admiration and was not thereafter harmed. Among such frontiersmen were Moses Van Campen, an early settler in Allegany County, and "the Daniel Boone of the Genesee Valley," Horatio Jones.

The Senecas were not an indolent people. They made many things with their hands, canoes of bark stretched over ash frames; lacrosse sticks, war clubs, snowshoes, bows and arrows, pestles and mortars. They carved out wooden bowls, platters, spoons and other utensils. They made pipes, kettles, bowls and other articles of pottery and clay.

Their women took no vacations. There were no long hunting parties or fishing expeditions for them. It was the men who gathered the bark for ropes and cords but it was the women who completed the job. The women cut and helped tan the pelts the men brought home and they made them into clothing and moccasins. They made the hunting shirts and leggings, often embroidered with moosehair and porcupine quills. All this in addition to the care of the home and the children and the work in the fields.

The men usually made their own tight-fitting caps over which floated a plume or two held in place by a spindle. The Iroquois did not wear war bonnets as did the Indians of the plains. Such headgear would have been clumsy in a

land of overhanging trees and bushes. The early Seneca warrior wore only a breech cloth. He painted his body with pigments mixed from native plants to make his being fearsome in battle and often wore into the fray the totem of his clan as a charm.

The Senecas were an ingenious people and evolved such gadgets as a slender six-foot wooden "air gun" for killing birds with an arrow inserted in its tube, filled with thistledown to make the implement airtight, and which was discharged by blowing from the mouth, and a "firemaker," a combination of wheel, revolving shaft and string which made sparks that would ignite dry bits of wood. They made wooden baby carriers, which consisted of a frame to which the blanketed infant was tied with bead work belts and a burden strap attached to the forehead of the mother and the frame on her back. While the mother was about her work, she hung the carrier in the limb of a tree and the breeze would rock the infant to sleep.

Wampum made of shells was used for recording historic events and the symbols had to be memorized. There were no written records, save some crude pictorial designs. The Indians had no particular need for currency, at least not before the Europeans came.

After the advent of the European, the Indians discarded their old weapons and tools of stone and clay and adopted steel and brass, as well as many of the white man's ways. Dr. Arthur Parker in his "Analytical History of the Senecas" wrote that in 1765 the Senecas of Kanadesaga (Geneva) were living in log houses as comfortable as any of the white settlers on the frontier. Some had floors of split logs, stoned-

in fireplaces, with Dutch ovens, crane and kettle, as well as luxurious fur rugs on the floors. The Indians dressed much like the whites of the frontier, some wearing broadcloth coats while retaining their old hunting shirts, moccasins and leggings. They were in close association with the British at Geneva and some, as did the famous Red Jacket, preened themselves in military coats given them by the English. Their women wore overdresses of some bright color, bedecked with ribbons and beads, broadcloth skirts, flannel underskirts and leggings.

* * *

With the white men the Indians were reserved, taciturn and full of studied dignity. In their own homes and villages they were sociable and witty, full of jokes and puns.

Despite the exalted place given women in the Iroquois government and the law of inheritance through the mother line in the clans, the male did not regard his women as his equals in every day life. The Senecas sought the companionship of their own sex and there was little romantic attachment among them. Marriages were arranged by the elders and infidelity was rare.

They had their own system of birth control or "planned parenthood." Births were planned at four-year intervals so that every child could enjoy his mother's undivided attention. Children were usually limited to three in a family. If there were more, the surplus ones often were turned over to families without children. The young were well loved and well cared for. In no Indian home, even to this day, has been heard the mother's shrill scolding of children so common among the palefaces. When a boy became 12 years old,

he was placed in a group led by a wise elder who taught the lore of the forest—the Seneca Boy Scout system.

Between wars and hunting expeditions, the men kept in trim by frequent athletic contests, such as foot races, games of ball and of lacrosse, snowshoe races and javelin and hoop games. Contests were staged bewteen clans and between villages. Competition was spirited and large crowds of rooters turned out. The athletes vied only for the honor of their clan or their village and victory was the only reward.

The Indians were inveterate gamblers and doted on betting games. They had a game called bowl and peachstones, reminiscent of a white man's pastime, in which six peachstones, ground down to oval shape, with one side colored and the other white, would be rolled in a wooden bowl and shaken out. If five of one color should come up, the chances are some luckless Seneca had lost not only the beans in the bank but perhaps his blanket, his tomahawk or some other prized possession.

The dance played an important part in their religious, social and patriotic spheres. The Senecas danced when the men went off to battle or to the hunt and when they returned. They danced in thanksgiving for all the good things the Master of Life had bestowed. They danced in reverent tribute to the dead. And as they danced they sang in the high-pitched, far-carrying chant peculiar to the Indians, to the throb of the water drum and the rattle of the turtle shell.

Their dances, most of them centuries old, were performed with artistry and grace. They yielded few vicarious thrills for the dancers. There were 14 dances in which both men and women took part, seven for women alone and 11 for

men alone. Only in one, the Dance of the Joined Hands, did the persons of one sex touch the other—and in later days that was banned by the Keepers of the Faith. They had a feather dance, a religious rite of long duration which tested the endurance of the participants; the shuffle dance, the trotting dance, the pigeon dance and the eagle dance, to name a few. All were followed by feasting. The Senecas were a joyous people.

The war dance held a grimmer note. In every village stood a war post, a peeled pole 10 or 12 feet high. On this was marked the record of campaigns, the number of scalps and prisoners taken. When a war captain or even a brave without rank got the urge to organize a war party, he went about the village sounding his war whoop. Then he strode to the war post and drove into it his tomahawk, painted red and decked with red feathers and black wampum. Then if sufficient recruits had been obtained, the war dance began.

Lewis Henry Morgan, in "The League of the Iroquois," describes the scene in this fashion: "The war whoop and the responses, the simultaneous commencement of the war song and the dance, the slight cessation in the middle of the tune with a change in the music, the renewal of the dance with redoubled animation and the finale of the war song, three minutes after its start with the stately walk at the beat of a drum around a central point."

Anyone could make a speech at such occasions and the Senecas were born orators, in a language devoid of labials and with an enormous number of words—a language few white men have ever mastered.

Sometimes the war spirit flared in several villages at the

same time; sometimes the whole nation was called to arms; sometimes it was only a small expedition but in any event each chief led his own people into the fray.

When the campaign was over and the war party returned, the war whoop was sounded at the gates of the village and all the people turned out. The Senecas in their days of glory generally had cause for jubilation—mixed with mourning for the warriors who did not come home.

Then leading their prisoners like the Romans of old, the Red Romans of the West would enter their home town in triumph and march straight to the war post.

There the speeches began, the drums throbbed, the turtle shells rattled, the chanting voices rose, the figures whirled and pranced and the war dance was on again.

Such was V-Day in the ancient land of the Senecas.

Chapter 6

"The Great Law" of the Long House

No man knows for certain the year that the Tree of Peace with the eagle spreading its wings above it was raised beside the waters of Onondaga Lake and the League of the Five Iroquois Nations was born.

It is told in the mythology of the Long House that the great Dekanawideh came from heaven to hand down the Great Law to the people through his spokesman, Hiawatha. They sent out emissaries to all the Indian nations that spoke the mother tongue, inviting them to gather at the Tree of Peace and join hands in a great confederacy.

At that time the Senecas, the People of the Hill, were divided into two factions, one dwelling at the northern fringe of the Finger Lakes and the other in the Honeoye Valley. To the principal town of the latter group, Totiakton, on the present site of Rochester Junction, came the envoys of the League. At first they were received with indifference. The independent Western Senecas were reluctant to join their Eastern brothers as a nation of the new confederacy.

One day in summer when the grass was knee high and the peace messengers were still at Totiakton, the skies darkened until midday became as black as midnight. It was a total eclipse of the sun. The Senecas were sore afraid. To them the phenomenon was a sign direct from the Ruler of the

Heavens. Forthwith they agreed to join the League of Peace.

That is the tale that has been handed down from generation to generation of Senecas. From it a student of Indian lore, Prof. Paul Wallace of Lebanon Valley University, has deduced that the year was 1451 because only then and in 664 was there a total eclipse of the sun in early times.

While the origin of the League of the Iroquois is shrouded in myths and legends, from the beginning of recorded history up to the American Revolution it was a massive reality. It was conceived of a desire for peace but by force it conquered its tribal foes, one by one. The empire-building European powers came to know and respect the strength of the Five Nations.

And it is one of the marvels of the ages that a primitive forest people established, probably a century before white feet touched American shores, a system of government that is not unlike our own Federal Union and maintained, long before Woodrow Wilson, a League of Nations that worked.

* * *

Despite the picturesque legends, the religious symbolisms and the peace ideology that surround the founding of the League of the Ho-de-no-sau-nee, the People of the Long House, it was built on the solid bed rock of practical self interest, almost of grim necessity.

Twenty thousand Iroquois, living between the Hudson and the Genesee, surrounded on all sides by 100,000 potential enemies, sought to bind together in a far flung union, through a pledge of eternal peace, the nations of their own racial stock: The Hurons to the north and west; the An-

dastes or Conestogas, to the south; the Neuter or Neutral people along the Niagara; and the Eries beside the lake that bore their name.

None of them, not even the peace-loving Neutral Nation, a sort of buffer state between two warlike powers, the Hurons and the Senecas, would join the League of Peace. In the end every one of them was conquered or swallowed up by the mighty Iroquois. Through intermarriage and assimilation it is estimated that by 1650, eleven different nations were represented among the Senecas alone.

So to the symbolic Tree of Peace, to the capitol of the confederacy, the Long House of elm bark that rose on the shores of Onondaga Lake, where burned the Fire That Never Dies, came only the Five Nations: The Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onondagas, the Cayugas and the Senecas. The Tuscaroras, latecomers into the League, were fugitives from the south and considered a minor nation.

Each of the Five Nations was given a task. The Mohawks, Keepers of the Eastern Door of the Long House, were receivers of tribute from subjugated peoples, many of whom lived near their borders. The Onondagas were the Fire Keepers, to preside over the council and to keep the records of the Indian Parliament. The Senecas, most populous and warlike of the nations, were the Keepers of the Western Door, the gate through which invasion was most likely to come. They lived nobly up to their proud title to the last.

In its heyday the League could muster the greatest military force on the continent, with the Seneca warriors equalling in number the total strength of the other four nations.

But, as that authority on the Iroquois, Rochester's Lewis Henry Morgan, pointed out, the confederacy was more than

a military alliance. "The League made the Ho-de-no-sau-nee a people under one government, one system of institutions and one executive will."

Its governing body was a council of 50 civil chiefs or hereditary sachems, representing each nation and chosen by the women from the elite of the young men, who were trained for government from boyhood. The Senecas had only eight members on the council.

In the sachems resided executive, judicial and legislative functions. They had the right to declare war, to admit new states, to fix boundaries, and provide for the common defense, powers vested in our own Federal government today.

There was no dictatorship in the Long House. Concentration of power in any individual or group was shunned. Each nation was guaranteed its sovereignty, while recognizing the authority of the confederation, and was granted autonomy in its local affairs over which the sachems ruled, each in his own domain.

The Great Law assured free speech, religious liberty, the right to bear arms and security of each citizen in his person and property. Do the words have a familiar ring? Read the Bill of Rights of the American Constitution and reflect that it was adopted three centuries after the Great Law of the Iroquois was handed down to a so called "savage" people.

Only when the sachems sat at the council fire was there visible evidence of a central government. In the congress of the Long House, which usually convened in the time of falling leaves, all affairs of state were settled publicly, open covenants were openly arrived at, and there were no smoke-filled rooms where a handful decided the destinies of thou-

sands. There was no gag rule or cloture. Debate was unlimited and oratory rose to high repute in the Long House.

The Great Fire Keeper was only a moderator without power to command. To him each nation reported its will. All acts of the League council had to be ratified by unanimous vote. The council had the power to depose a member found unworthy. Democracy worked—with dignity and deliberation—in the forest republic of the Five Nations.

The League recognized no religious leaders but each nation had Keepers of the Faith who officiated at ceremonials and supervised religious affairs. Church and state were separated under the Great Law of the Iroquois.

The war chiefs, under the League system, were subordinate to the civil chiefs or sachems. They were elected by their people, had no hereditary titles and were unlimited in number. Any sachem who took the war path had to relinquish his place in the council. The war captains recruited their own forces and thus many expeditions were led without authorization, by young hotbloods who had become chiefs. As time went by, the influence of the war chiefs increased. Today the names of warriors like Joseph Brant of the Mohawks and Cornplanter and Little Beard of the Senecas are remembered while the wise men who sat at the council fire are forgotten.

In time of general war the council selected two military leaders who were really chiefs of staff to devise strategy, rather than field commanders. Invariably these military leaders were Senecas, a tribute to the war prowess of the Keepers of the Western Door.

A clever system of dividing the population into political

families or clans gave unity to the League. Marriage within the clan was forbidden and children automatically became members of the mother's clan or tribe. Thus these political families were scattered through the nations, knitting the federation more closely together. The names of the clans, each with its heraldic emblem or sacred totem which was worn proudly into battle, were the Turtle, Wolf, Bear, Beaver, Snipe, Heron and Hawk.

The Iroquois gave no land titles but as long as an individual used and tilled a piece of land, his right to it was not questioned. Inheritance in the clans was through the mother line. But in the main ownership of real estate meant little to the people of the forest who often shifted their village sites. They could never understand the paleface's overwhelming passion for land—especially other people's land.

Women of the Iroquois republic had the right to vote and a strong voice in their government centuries before the Susan B. Anthony Equal Suffrage Amendment became part of the Great Law of the white men.

The Great Law of the woods contained no criminal code although certain misdemeanors could be punished by the sachems. Ostracism was a potent cure for transgressions. Murderers were given over to the private vengeance of the family of the slain who could claim his life even after a lapse of years. But the murderer could appease the bereaved kin by gifts and escape punishment.

Adultery was punishable by public whipping if the charge was sustained in a council but the woman was held to blame and she alone was chastised. Seldom did this sentence have

to be carried out. Divorces were sanctioned but were rare.

Under the Great Law there were no policemen, no jails. Before the white man came with his firewater to debauch the children of the forest, they were little needed—for the red men knew the tribal code and seldom violated it.

* * *

The historical significance of the Iroquois League is thus ably summed up by Prof. Wallace:

"One of the solid rock realities of early American history was the power and prestige of the Five Nations. . . . In all the flux of Indian relations, from the first white settlements to the end of the 18th Century, they remained stable. . . . French, Dutch, English and American colonists feared and courted them. In the white man's towns and cities when the chiefs of the Long House came to make a treaty, they held their own easily in the twists and turns of diplomacy. In their own woods they were supreme."

In the end the palefaces were supreme. The glory of the Long House departed and its council fire was quenched forever. But the white man marveled at the Great Law of a primitive people and copied it in many ways. And the legendary speech of Dekaniwedeh to his apostles on the shore of Onondaga so long ago, still rings true:

"Go ye out among the hostile nations and show them this Constitution and proclaim to them the unchallengeable laws of peace."

Chapter 7

The Gods of the Forest

"Then the Black Robe chief, the Prophet,
Told his message to the people,
Told the purport of his mission,
Told them of the Virgin Mary
And her Blessed Son, the Saviour.
How He rose from where they laid Him,
Walked again with His disciples
And ascended into heaven."
From "The Song of Hiawatha."

From the lips of the French priests, the Senecas first heard the story of Christianity.

But long before the first Black Robes came into the wilderness early in the 17th Century with their crucifixes, their beads and prayer books and raised the Cross over their bark missions in the Indian towns, the Senecas had their own religion. In that ancient faith there were many gods. Before the Jesuits and the Franciscans came, the Indians had the idea of one Supreme Being, a Great Spirit who was the Master of All Life.

Like most religions, that of the Indians was rooted in the supernatural. They believed in an eternal tug of war between the forces of good and of evil. They had a supreme

The Legend of Niagara—Last Sacrifice of an Indian Maiden to the Gods of the Thunder Water.

Red Jacket, the Silver Tongued, with Medal George Washington Presented Him.

faith that in the end good would prevail. They believed in a hereafter, in a shining path that led into the heavens straight to the Milky Way, a path all men sometime must walk. The sky road forked and the good went one way, to a land of everlasting peace, and the evil went the other way, into oblivion.

A primitive forest people, they saw good and bad spirits in all the aspects of nature, omens and portents in the elements and feeling in all created things. They communed with the winds, the waters, the rocks and the trees.

The Senecas heard the voices of their gods in the mighty thunder of Niagara; in the ripple of the Genesee over the rocks beside their council house at Caneadea Town; in the soft thud of white snowflakes on evergreen branches above the waters of Hemlock Lake; in the gentle whisper of the wind that silvered the willows on Seneca's shores and in the berserk roar of the blizzard across the Cattaraugus hills.

Their formal religion was one of thanksgiving for the gifts of nature and was marked by seasonal festivals. In the Spring was the Tree Festival in gratitude for the flowing sap of the maple. Then came the Planting Feast in which the Great Spirit was invoked to bless the seed. There followed the Strawberry Festival, one of rejoicing in the first fruits of the earth; the Festival of the Green Corn, to celebrate the ripening of the crops; the Harvest Thanksgiving and in mid-winter the nine-day New Year Jubilee, in thanks for the year's products of the chase and the fields.

These were joyous occasions, marked by songs, dancing and feasting. The Indian religion, despite its supernatural overtones, was not dominated by fear. It was tolerant, ex-

cept for violation of tribal taboos. The Iroquois respected the religious beliefs of others and never required a captive to abandon his own faith. They punished witches, it is true, but so did the white settlers of the New England town of Salem in a later day.

The Senecas had no priesthood class, no select ones who wore special robes. They had an unlimited number of elected officials called Keepers of the Faith who fixed the dates of the religious festivals and supervised them. They were censors of the public behavior but had no power to punish offenders. That was the province of the sachems.

In their religion there were no Ten Commandments graven on tablets of stone. They had a simple and positive code, unwritten but firmly planted in the hearts of the generations. In the ancient faith of their fathers these were the cardinal sins: Cowardice, selfishness, disloyalty and untruth.

Their religion, like many another, was interlaced with legends and folk tales. They had their special version of the Story of the Creation, which is still told around Seneca firesides—how the world began on the turtle's back.

Midway in the heavens in a white lodge under a spreading tree lived the god, Earth Holder. His wife, Earth Mother, was, like Eve in another Paradise, possessed of an insatiate curiosity. She just had to know what lay under the roots of the Celestial Tree and poked around them until she had uprooted it. Her husband in Jovian wrath hurled her down through the hole she had made in the sky.

At that time there was no land, only endless wastes of water under the canopy of heaven, and as the Earth Mother

fell, the water birds spread their wings together to catch her. The turtle and the muskrat joined forces in her behalf. The turtle rose to the surface of the water and the muskrat went down to the bottom of the sea and came up with a bit of earth which he deposited on the turtle's back. That earth grew, first only large enough to hold the Sky Woman, and at length into a large island.

To the Sky Woman was born a daughter, who matured at once. She became the bride of an invisible lover whom she met on the island and she bore twin sons. One was fair and open of countenance. He was the Light One or Good Mind. The other was dark and scowling. He was the Dark One or Evil Mind. After Evil Mind slew his own mother, the dutiful twin tended her grave—until from the soil above her breasts sprang the corn plant. Then from her body grew the squash, from her fingers the bean vine, from her head the tobacco plant and from her toes the tubers.

Then Good Mind went on a long and perilous journey to the sky world, in quest of his father. He found a shining being atop a mountain. It was the Sun. After subjecting Good Mind to many tests, the god acknowledged him as his son and sent him back to earth with bags of birds, fish, mammals and plants. Good Mind loosed them and they began to multiply and flourish on the land.

The wicked Evil Mind sought, like Cain of the Hebrews, to slay his own brother but he failed and was banished to the dark underground, taking with him all evil creatures. Good Mind then created human beings from clay after his own image which he saw reflected in a pool. His work done,

he became invisible and returned to the Sky World over a path formed by a ray of light. With him went his grandmother, the Eve-like woman, who had opened the rift in the heavens because she was so curious.

Forever after, to the Indians the earth was mother and the sun was father and three sisters of sustenance, born of the union of earth and sun—the corn, bean and squash—were sacred. Especially venerated was the Corn Maiden. It was a mortal sin to destroy corn and when the white invaders, Denonville and Sullivan, burned and hacked down the Indian corn, the Senecas regarded them as sacrilegious wantons.

Born of the legend of the creation was a belief in good and evil spirits in nature. The beneficent god, Cloud Land Eagle, roamed the skies and when the land was thirsty, watered it from the dew sack he carried between his shoulders. A powerful deity was Heno, the Thunderer, who killed the Horned Snakes who lived with Evil Mind under the waters. And when the giants with stone coats that no arrow could pierce were driven into a cave near Onondaga Lake, it was the Thunderer who shook down rocks on them until all perished.

Great was Gaoh, God of the Winds, who chained four beasts of varying temperaments, each to his station, the Bear at the North Wind, the Fawn at the South Wind, the Moose at the East Wind and the Panther at the West Wind. When Gaoh slept, all the world was calm. When he awoke and loosed one of his beasts the winds, some fierce, some gentle, blew across the land. Another Indian god was Gustahote, the Spirit of the Great Rock, he who never changed.

There were friendly little folk who lived in the woods,

not unlike the Leprechauns of Irish folklore. They scared the insects away from the crops and turned the fruit so it would ripen in the sunshine.

The Indians believed in ghosts and reincarnation. They thought departed spirits sometimes reappeared in the form of animals and some beasts and birds were venerated above others. The red men sacrificed weapons, dishes and ornaments to the spirit of animals slain in the hunt.

Magic and incantations were used to exorcise the devils that brought about sickness. When an Indian fell ill, three masked men of his clan would visit his house. Each wore a deer skin about his shoulders and another around his waist. The visitors began a slow dance, passing at each round between the fire and the patient, who sat nude on the hearth. As they pranced by the fire, two of the dancers would gather ashes from it and scatter them over the sick man while the third shook a turtle shell rattle over the patient, the bed and the room. Then the masked magicians vanished and the village assembled to eat the food the woman of the house had prepared—and to see whether the magic worked.

* * *

"Make a joyful noise unto God . . . sing forth the honour of His name. . . . I will offer unto Thee burnt sacrifices. . . "

Those are snatches from the Book of Psalms in the Bible of the palefaces. The children of the American forest never read the Hebraic passages yet curious parallels exist.

The Indians "made a joyful noise" unto their gods. They sang and they danced at their religious festivals and they offered burnt sacrifices.

The Feather Dance of the Seneca Nation was, unlike the Feather Dance of Gypsy Rose Lee, a religious rite, but like Miss Lee's version, it possessed considerable grace and artistry. It was staged by a select group of from 15 to 30 males, who stripped to the waist and wearing ornaments on arms and necks, stepped in dignified and stately cadence set by the chant of two singers who were accompanied by the rattle of turtle shells. It was a long ceremony and taxed the endurance of those who participated.

The New Year Festival, usually occurring late in February, for the red men observed a 13-month calendar, was a highlight in the Seneca social world. Each day of the jubilee had a different ritual which included speeches and dream telling; visits to village huts by men with blackened faces; dolorous, as well as gay, song and dance; public confession of sins with penitents forced to walk a straight line in the snow.

The climax of the Indian New Year celebration was the Sacrifice of the White Dog, in accordance with a covenant between the Great Spirit and the people under which each year at least one animal must be sent back to heaven in exchange for all the favors granted during the thirteen moons. A white dog was chosen for the burnt offering because white was the symbol of purity and the dog was man's intelligent and faithful companion. Those who officiated must be free of immoral taint. The dog had to be strangled, without a bone being broken or a drop of blood being shed.

After death, the animal's body was adorned with beads, paint and feathers and hung on a pole for five days. On the fifth day the body was taken down and laid reverently upon

a bier of bark to be carried to the council fire. There the people acknowledged their sins—for the white dog was a consecrated victim on which was laid the transgressions of the tribe.

The body then was carried to a pyre of dried wood, ornaments and all, and amid speech-making, the fire was kindled. As it burned, the people threw pulverized mint into the flames to create incense.

Henry O'Reilly, in his "Sketches of Rochester," the first history of the Flour City, published in 1838, told of the last Sacrifice of the White Dog in Rochester. It was in 1813, only two years after Colonel Rochester had laid out his village at the Falls of the Genesee and when there were several Indians living about the settlement, among them a chief with the picturesque name of Hot Bread. The scene of the ceremonial is placed in the Troup Street-Livingston Park area of the Third Ward. Some historians have fixed it on the eminence at Troup and Clarissa Streets where until recently stood the imposing mansion of the late William S. Kimball, tobacco magnate.

Squawkie Hill, south of Mount Morris at the end of the High Banks, was the scene in 1825 of a significant White Dog sacrificial rite. It was the Senecas' farewell to one of their historic town sites, for that year the white men took over the title to the Squawkie Hill reservation.

* * *

The Senecas had their secret societies, each with its own ritual, password and symbols, not unlike our Elks, Moose, Eagles and other fraternities. The cults or associations of

the Indians, however, had a supernatural basis and each had a special formula for invoking the aid of its guardian spirit among the forces of nature. The societies staged their dances and pageants at the various traditional festivals.

Such societies included the Otters, the Company of False Faces, who wore hideous masks; the Sisters of the Sustainers of Life, the Talkers with the Spirits and the Ancient Guards of the Mystic Potence, also known as the Little Water Company or the Grand Medicine Lodge of the Night Song. If the titles sound fantastic to you, think of some of our own fraternities who call themselves ancient mystic nobles, knights of this and that, benevolent and protective and loyal orders, and have such officials as grand exalted rulers, patriarchs, most worshipful masters, imperial potentates and the like.

The Little Water Company is based on the legend of the kindly hunter who spared the wild animals whenever he could and who took only what game he needed for sustenance. One day the animals found this hunter lying in the woods, scalped and left for dead by enemy tribesmen. The beasts called a council to devise a way of restoring their friend to life. The sleek black bear kept his chest warm with his paws and the lean timber wolf licked the place where the scalp had been lifted. Each animal gave a bit of his flesh to make a medicine that would revive the hunter. Then they gathered in a circle and all night long sang a haunting refrain to add potency to the medicine magic. Meanwhile the bright colored humming bird had gone on a strange mission, to bring back the hunter's scalp from his enemies. The bird swooped down on the camp, grabbed the hunter's scalp and returned with it at dawn to the council of animals

who gently replaced the scalp on their friend's head. The hunter then rose to his feet and was well again.

To this day, the rite is observed on the reservations among the non-Christian Indians who all night in a pitch dark room chant the medicine song that only the members of the society know.

Veneration for the dead was a precept of the Seneca faith. In early days an entire year was devoted to mourning during the departed's journey to the land beyond the skies. Another early custom was the freeing of a captured bird over the grave on the evening of the burial to bear the spirit away to its heavenly home.

Generally the Senecas buried their dead in a sleeping posture without caskets and with the body enclosed in skins and blankets and sometimes wrapped in bark. Lewis H. Morgan in his "League of the Iroquois" wrote of an ancient custom of burying the dead in a sitting posture facing the East and of placing the body on a bark scaffolding where it was left to waste away until only the skeleton was left. Then the bones were placed in a bark lodge and preserved for generations.

Sullivan's soldiers in the invasion of Senecaland in 1779 told in their journals of finding at Kendaia on Seneca Lake "three grand tombs where it is supposed the Indians buried some of their chiefs, they were all painted very fine and made of hewed timber and one of them had a chimney on it."

In time the period of mourning was reduced to 9 or 10 days. But the custom of burying beloved objects with the deceased continued for centuries. Mary Jemison, "The White Woman of the Genesee," whose adult life was spent with

the Indians, told that her husband, the aged and giant Seneca chief, Hiakatoo, was laid to rest with his war club, tomahawk, scalping knife, powder flask, flint, a small cake and a cup beside him. He wore his finest raiment.

Mary Jemison, describing later day burial customs of her adopted people, said that two or three candles were burned in the coffins and that as the coffin was lowered into the ground, an Indian dignitary would make a consoling address. The air was filled with lamentations and the death wail and the next of kin kept a fire burning at the head of the grave where they sat until the dawn for nine successive nights. While the soul was on its long flight along the Sky Road, there were no dances, no gayety. After the mourning period had passed, a feast was held but never thereafter was the name of the departed mentioned among his people.

* * *

The ancient religion of the Senecas was a simple one, untrammeled by clashing dogmas. It also was a singularly free and joyous one. The Senecas were a warlike people and often they were cruel to their enemies. But there is no record that they ever persecuted another people just because that other people did not worship the gods of the Senecas.

"The groves were God's first temples" and the so-called "pagans" of the forest found their God in the manifestations of nature all around them—in the rush of the waters, the rustle of the treetops, the music of tinkling waterfalls, the glory of the sunset, the magic of the moonlight, the wind sighing through fields of waving corn, the flow of the sap from the maple tree, the beat of the rain on the rocks, the

mating call of the birds and the beasts in the woods—in all good things the Master of Life had granted.

For all these things they were grateful and they "made a joyful noise unto their God."

Above all, they approached their Creator with reverence and humility. They could not understand the air of proprietorship some Christians assumed toward the Supreme Being. Nor could they understand the Christian way of telling Him all their troubles. If He is all-seeing and omnipotent, does He not know of them without any reminder?

Chapter 8

Legends of "The People of the Great Hill"

"Should you ask whence these stories,
Whence these legends and traditions?

I should answer, I should tell you;
From the valleys and the hilltops,
From the slender lakes like fingers,
From the land of thunder water,
From the land of glens and caverns,
From the land of mighty warriors,
Of the Senecas, Door Keepers
Of the League of Hiawatha,
And the vanquished Neutral Nation."

(With apologies to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow for taking liberties, for purely geographical reasons, with part of the introduction to his "Song of Hiawatha.")

On the walls of the Community Center on the edge of the Tonawanda Reservation near Akron hangs a striking painting, the work of a young Seneca of the Reservation, Ernest Smith, a student in the arts and crafts course at the Center.

It is titled "The Story Teller" and it depicts a venerable Indian, seated before the fire and telling in animated fashion

and with gestures, one of the many legends of his people while about him are grouped rapt listeners of all ages.

Because they had no written records, that is the way the legends of the Senecas were handed down from generation to generation—a wise old man with a gift for story telling keeping alive the folk tales of his Nation in the moon of winter when the lakes and streams were frozen, the hunting grounds and trails were buried deep under white drifts and the Bear, the cruel North Wind, howled outside the lodge, where the great log fire burned cheerily.

About Western New York, this old Indian land, the old Indian legends linger. They cluster about our hills, our valleys, our streams, our slender lakes like fingers and our waterfalls. Some are fantastic, some are sad but all are picturesque—like the legend of the Serpent of the Great Hill.

There are several versions of that story. Even the exact location is in doubt and the site is the legendary birthplace of the Senecas, "The People of the Great Hill." According to popular belief, the place is Bare Hill, the gaunt and barren mountain that towers above Canandaigua Lake, "The Chosen Place." But Dr. Arthur C. Parker, the archeologist, is certain that the hill of the Senecas' nativity, the sacred "Genundewah," is South Hill in the "Whaleback" country at the head of Canandaigua Lake. It has the same phenomenon of sterility as Bare Hill (both are thickly covered with shale) and that is part of the legend, one version of which goes like this:

Long ago the Creator caused the earth to open and out of the side of a great hill near a long and lovely lake the

ancestors of the Seneca Nation came into being. For a time they lived in peace. Then a boy found a little snake in the woods. It was an unusual reptile in that it had two heads. The boy took it home, made a pet of it and fed the choicest meat into its twin mouths. The serpent grew to prodigious size and its appetite grew with it. Soon its young master could not find enough game to satisfy its hunger. The People of the Great Hill came to fear it as a monster.

Finally the great snake in his desperate hunger encircled the hill and barred the gates with its opened jaws so that no one could escape. The people grew hungry and tried to get away. One by one the monster ate them. At last only a young warrior and his sister remained of all the People of the Hill.

One night the youth had a vision. If he would fletch his arrows with his sister's hair, they would possess a fatal charm over the monster. He followed his dream and shot his magic arrows straight into the great red jaws of the enemy of his people. The reptile was mortally wounded and in his death agony he writhed his way down the hill, tearing down trees and flailing the earth until he finally slid into the lake and was seen no more.

As the great snake rolled down the hill, he disgorged the skulls of the Senecas he had devoured. In the area have been found rounded stones divided into geometric patterns and weirdly resembling human skulls. And to this day nothing has ever grown in the path of the serpent down that hillside.

Many of the legends of the Indians that deal with our region have been compiled into a delightful book, "Rum-

bling Winds" by Dr. Parker. While they are primarily for children and revolve about the exploits of a fabulous youth called Skunny Wundy, they are authentic tales that the author heard from the old men of the Nation when he was a little lad on the Cattaraugus Reservation. And many of them are placed in familiar settings.

The scene of one is Buttermilk Falls on the Oatka near Le Roy. The brave young Skunny Wundy was playing with his sister there when they were surrounded and menaced by stone giants. The youth hid under the rock shelf underneath the falls and sneaking up on the giants when their backs were turned, he made a sudden ouctry. The giants turned quickly and their heads snapped off. It was a secret Skunny Wundy knew—that stone giants cannot turn their heads but will try to do so when frightened by a sudden noise.

In another legend, the valiant youth came upon a man tied with thongs to a post while fire licked at his feet. That was near Little Beard's Town in the Genesee Valley. Skunny Wundy untied the man and as a reward received a magic white powder. Our hero put the powder on the grass and a deer came bounding out of the brush to lick it up eagerly. The youth made friends with the deer and rode on the back of the swimming animal across and up and down the Genesee. In return the lad told his friend, the deer, how to elude the hunters. Of course the magic white powder was salt.

Conesus Lake, unlike some other summer resorts, is free from mosquitoes. Every loyal summer resident will tell you so. There's a legend about that, too.

Long ago when the pests first appeared around the Indian

village on the shore of the pretty lake in the hills, Shiodiosko, the Mischief Maker, sought to destroy them by building a smudge fire in which he tossed some sacred incense. As the magic smoke column arose in a mighty cloud, the frightened mosquito swarm merged into one creature, almost as large as the lake itself. Down over the helpless village this monster swooped, its wings humming like a fleet of bombers.

The Mischief Maker, appalled at what he had done, vanished amid the smoke cloud of his making. But the Good Spirit sent a mighty eagle down from heaven to save the Conesus villagers. The bird drove his sword-like beak into the super-insect, killed it and was carrying off its body when one leg dropped downward. A youth of the village shot an arrow into the falling leg. Blood spurted out and each drop of blood became a small mosquito, armed with a stinger that drew blood from human flesh.

Thus the pests again were loosed upon the earth. But they all flew away from Conesus Lake, where the magic smoke and the fierce bird had almost destroyed them and they never returned.

* * *

There are many other so called Indian legends that cluster about familiar places in this old land of the Senecas. They did not originate with any tribal story teller in most cases but rather are fantasies of the palefaces.

But some of them are picturesque, whatever their origin may be. And after all, are legends supposed to be true stories?

The legends linger about the Seneca Oil Spring near Cuba

Lake. It was famous the length and breadth of the Indian country long before the first white man saw the viscous liquid floating on the surface of the stagnant pool and discovered there the first petroleum in America.

According to Seneca legend, it was the original pool of oil or fat into which all animals were driven to make them fat. Good Mind then caught such as he thought should not be fat and stripped them of their oil. Among those doomed to be forever lean were the wolf, the mink, the otter and the skunk. Favored beasts were the bear, beaver, buffalo and deer.

About the origin of petroleum there is another, more earthy legend. One day a very fat squaw waddled to the Oil Spring for water. The ground was soft and she slipped into the spring and vanished. Ever since then oil has risen to the surface at the Oil Spring in the wooded hills.

Here's a tale, a sad one, that clings to Keuka, the most gentle of the Finger Lakes, as told by Steuben County Clerk Reuben B. Oldfield of Bath, a lifelong student of Indian lore:

Once long ago in the moon of the strawberry harvest, a young Seneca was crossing Keuka Lake in a canoe with his wife and young child. A sudden tempest smote the waters and upset the canoe. The woman and baby sank from sight before the man could rescue them. He managed to swim ashore. The lake calmed and the storm passed as quickly as it had come. But there was no sign of woman or child.

Then an empty canoe drifted in with the wind. On shore a heartbroken young Seneca shook his fist at the lake and pronounced this curse:

"Today you seemed to smile. Your eyes laughed when

my child and my wife dipped their fingers in your silky waters. You seemed to join us in thanking the Good Spirit for the coming of Summer and the gift of the ripe strawberries, first fruit of the earth.

"But you lied. You are a snake. You have taken my family. Therefore I curse you always to be hungry when the fifth moon is in the sky. You will catch and drown helpless women and children, for you will be hungry for them.

"I curse you to be unable to eat them. They will come to the top of the water and the wind will blow them to shore. I curse you always to be hungry when the fifth moon glows in the sky and the strawberries ripen in the woods."

And they say that when squalls bring tragedy to Keuka Lake in the moon of the strawberry harvest—and only then —the bodies of the victims always drift into shore.

They tell, too, of the spectral Indian, the Spirit Boatman, who is seen on moonlight nights paddling his canoe around the strange Painted Rocks on the southeastern edge of the lake called Seneca. He gazes for a moment at the images scrawled on the rocks there and then is seen no more.

They call Seneca's shores, "The Land of the Lake Guns," because for ages strange thunder has boomed out from the depths of the lake "that has no bottom." The superstitious red men heard in the uncanny rumble the voice of Heno, the God of Thunder, and they feared his anger. And out of "The Lake Guns" grew the legend of the "Wandering Chief."

He was a mighty warrior, one of the bravest and tallest of the clan. One June day when he was trailing a bear along the lake, a sudden fierce storm drove him to seek refuge

under a great willow tree at the edge of a cliff. There came a blinding flash and an ear-splitting crash. The God of Thunder had dealt both chief and tree a mortal blow. Together they tumbled into the lake. Together they floated out on its bosom.

The next day when storm clouds again gathered and the Lake Guns were calling like distant war drums, there drifted out on the lake what appeared to be the trunk of a great tree, protruding out of the water. On it, tall and stately stood the warrior, his arms folded, his features immobile as in death. Slowly and majestically the funeral barge floated around the lake. It was seen again and again—and always in the deathlike breathless hush that precedes the storm, when Heno rides the angry skies, loosing his fiery bolts and his artillery of the heavens.

* * *

None of the wonders of nature compelled more awe in the Indian breast than the majesty of Niagara Falls. They discerned in its mighty roar the voice of their gods. The land of the thunder water, now called the Niagara Frontier, was in early times the domain of the Neutral or Neuter Nation. It passed to the Senecas after the war of the middle 17th Century in which the Neutral people were all but exterminated.

The Niagara River and its thundering cataract were hallowed shrines of the Neutrals. To it they paid annual tribute, a part of their crops, trophies of the chase, even personal possessions like weapons and ornaments. They made an annual human sacrifice, too, and that gave rise to this legend:

Every Springtime when the leaves began to green in the land of the thunder water, the Neutral Nation chose from all its maidens the fairest. It was deemed a great honor to be so selected although it meant death to the chosen one.

As a sacrifice to appease the Spirit whose voice thundered from the foaming waters, the maiden was placed in a white canoe filled with flowers and fruit. On her head she wore a chaplet of white wild flowers. While the tribe gathered around the falls, the maiden, alone, exultant and unafraid, guided with her own hand the white canoe into the current that swiftly bore her over the abyss and to a sure place in the Indian heaven.

It came to pass that one Spring Lelawala, the daughter of a famous chief, Eagle Eye, was chosen for the sacrifice. The father in his Indian way hid his heartbreak in stoical silence. On the ceremonial day when the people assembled and all the land was green with Spring and just as the white canoe guided by the maiden's hand, swept out into the mad current above the waterfalls, another canoe shot swiftly from the bank and closely followed the white canoe over the precipice. In it was the chieftain father.

That chief had been well beloved and his daughter was the last maiden of the Neutral Nation ever to be sacrificed to the god that dwelt in the thunder water.

And the chief and his daughter still dwell in a crystal cave under the great falls and Lelawala is the Maid of the Mist.

Chapter 9

The Power and the Glory

"I have seen it in a vision,
Seen the great canoe with pinions,
Seen the people with white faces,
Seen the coming of the bearded
People of the wooden vessel."
From "The Song of Hiawatha."

By the middle of the 16th Century the Iroquois had heard through the far flung "grapevine" of the tribes of the coming of "people with white faces."

They heard tales from the Northland in 1535 and again in 1541 of "the bearded people of the wooden vessel" who had come to the shores of the St. Lawrence. Those visitors were Frenchmen, first of many to seek a foothold in a country the Indians thought was all theirs, and their leader was the bold mariner, Jacques Cartier.

The Indians Cartier encountered in Canada were the Northeastern Huron-Wyandots. He learned that they were at war with a Southern enemy. That enemy was the Iroquois. The Hurons in earlier days had driven the Mohawk-Onondagas out of Canada and down into New York State. The feud between the Hurons and the Iroquois was deep seated and bitter.

In 1608 Champlain, the father of Canada, founded the settlement of Quebec and sought to expand the power of France in the New World. He made the fateful decision to aid the Hurons in their war with the Iroquois. In 1609 Champlain with two French soldiers armed with guns and 60 Hurons attacked 200 Mohawks at Ticonderoga. The Mohawks had never before met "the thunder poles" of the palefaces and fled in disorder when the guns roared.

That was the start of a long guerrilla warfare, punctuated by occasional armistices, involving the French and the Hurons and their Indian allies on one side and the League of the Iroquois on the other.

In the end the Iroquois liquidated their ancient foes, the Hurons, in a war that raged from 1634 to 1650, marked by savage raids on French settlements as well as Huron villages. Finally, with the Senecas bearing the brunt of the fighting, as they did in most of the Indian wars, the Iroquois stormed the strongholds of Huronia in the Northwest and inflicted a crushing defeat on the enemy. The Hurons were scattered over the earth and by 1650 not a Huron settlement remained in New France.

Too many Huron wanderers were drifting into the country of the Neutral Nation along the Niagara to suit the Senecas, their neighbors to the East. The Neutral capital was on the cliffs above Lewiston and there according to tradition, lived the Mother of Nations, Djikonsaseh, the first woman born on earth. Her eldest daughter was her successor to the title which passed down the line in perpetuity. She was "The Peace Queen" and the nation in which she lived must never shed a brother's blood.

Nevertheless the Neutrals had refused to join the Peace League of the Iroquois to whom they were allied by blood and the Senecas were suspicious of the motives of this nation whose hunting grounds ran eastward to the Genesee.

So the Iroquois declared war on the Neutrals and by 1651 that peace-loving people was obliterated or assimiliated. The Mother of Nations was brought, a captive, to the Seneca prison camp along Mud Creek. The Neutral towns between Niagara Falls and the Oak Orchard Creek were destroyed and the Senecas took over the territory of the conquered people.

Three years after the fall of the Neutral Nation, the Iroquois struck again—at the Eries, "The Cat People," who lived in the southwestern section of New York State and across the line into Pennsylvania.

In 1653 the Eries had sent 30 ambassadors to Totiakton, (Rochester Junction) for a peace powwow. During the sessions an Erie murdered a Seneca. In retaliation 25 Eries were slain. Five escaped and went back to Erieland with the news.

The war drums beat again and 1,800 Iroquois, mostly Senecas, drove their war canoes into the Erie country and stormed the easternmost fort of their enemy, probably in the Cattaraugus Valley. They used their canoes, first as shields as they advanced, then as scaling ladders to enter the town where they crushed the Eries in a bloody hand-to-hand battle. That battle sealed the doom of the Erie Nation and the country of "The Cat People" passed into Seneca hands.

The Iroquois next turned on the Andastes or Conestogas who lived along the upper Susquehanna and for 13 years the war raged. It started in 1662 when Iroquois peace envoys

in an Andaste town near the site of Waverly were burned on scaffolds that rose high above the fort, so that their comrades waiting outside for the result of the peace mission could see the bodies dangling there. The Andastes were tough fighters and lasted until 1675 when they shared the fate of the other foes of the Iroquois and became homeless wanderers.

The wars from 1630 to 1675 had cut the Senecas' native strength by half but they had added an even greater number through prisoners they had taken and their policy of assimilating them.

Secure as masters of a vast new territory, the Keepers of the Western Door ranged southward against the Susquehannocks and west against the Illinois. They drove out the latter people, killed and captured hundreds but they did not exterminate them. Under French protection the Illinois returned to their homes later.

The Senecas were at the crest of their power yet they were troubled by the ambitions of the white peoples who were pushing at the borders of the Iroquois country. There were the French in Canada, ever seeking new trade routes; and the Dutch and the English to the east, ever on the reach for land and power.

The first palefaces to come into the Seneca land were the French. The pioneer was undoubtedly young Etienne Brule, courier of Champlain, who passed through the Seneca country on foot on his way to the Andastes whose aid Champlain sought in a futile foray against the Onondagas. On his return trip he was captured by the Senecas and taken to one of their towns, probably in the Honeoye Valley. After being

tortured, he was freed when a terrific electric storm broke. The Indians believed him in some way responsible for the heavenly cannonading.

The French sent out into the wilds many stout-hearted priests, Franciscans and Jesuits, in an attempt to Christianize the Iroquois. The first in Western New York was Joseph de la Roche Dallion, a Franciscan, who came into the Neutral country near Lewiston in 1626. The first white man to take up residence in the Genesee country was Father Jacques Fremin, a Jesuit, who in 1668 established at Rochester Junction the mission of La Conception. The Jesuits also had the mission of St. Jean at the Indian town near Lima; the mission of St. Michael's at the prison town near East Bloomfield and the chapel of St. Jacques on Boughton Hill, all established in 1670–73.

As early as 1660 the French explorer, La Salle, and the Jesuit Father Galinee visited one of the Seneca villages. Historians differ as to whether it was Boughton Hill or Rochester Junction. At any rate the Jesuits left a record that on the occasion of that visit white men first partook of "hot dog" in Western New York. It was genuine dog. The Senecas cooked the meat in a kettle after singeing off the animal's hair over the coals. The Frenchmen did not relish the dish.

The late 17th Century saw great activity by the French. They established Fort Frontenac at the site of Kingston in 1672 and there carried on a considerable trade with the Indians. In 1678 the Frenchman De la Motte built a palisaded warehouse on the site of Lewiston along the portage trail around Niagara Falls. Alexander M. Stewart of Roch-

ester, an ordained Baptist minister who is an authority on the French and Jesuits in this region, wrote that De la Motte obtained corn from the Senecas at Rochester Junction and doubtless carried it in baskets to the boat landing at Ellison Park. Thus the Indian corn fields along the Honeoye Creek provided the first produce ever to be hauled along the south shore of Lake Ontario.

In 1678 Father Louis Hennepin said the first mass in a chapel on the Niagara. And the next year La Salle built the Griffon, first sailing ship on the Great Lakes, near Lewiston.

That same year Franciscan friars came to the busy port of Irondequoit Bay and erected on the present grounds of Mercy High School the first house of worship in Rochester, a crude bark mission.

During this period of activity in religious and economic fields by the French, a sort of "cold war" was being waged between them and the English, who had gotten control of the New York colony from the Dutch. In their contest for domination of the New World, the fur trade and the water routes were all important—and many of those routes ran through the land of the Senecas.

The English governor of New York, Thomas Dongan, was seeking allies among the Iroquois by promising them the protection of the British Crown. In return the governor of New France, De la Barre, attempted to cow the Indians by sending an expedition against them up the St. Lawrence to the Salmon River, a futile and costly move.

In 1685, Louis XIV, the French monarch, tired of pouring men and money into New France without tangible results, sent a new governor to Canada with a reputation for getting

things done. He was the Marquis Denonville, who as a colonel of dragoons had distinguished himself in the war with the Turks.

Denonville first urged purchase of the colony of New York by the French but received no support in Paris for his plan. Then he resolved on an attack on the Senecas, most powerful of the Iroquois nations, to reduce them to submission. Meanwhile the English governor, Dongan, armed the Iroquois.

Denonville planned his invasion on a grand scale. Down from Montreal in the Spring of 1687 an armada of 1,500 Frenchmen and 500 Indian allies set out in 200 bateaux and canoes. Another band of 1,000 Indians under Tonti left the Western lakes. On a certain hour of a certain day the two forces were to join at Irondequoit Bay, establish a beach-head and push into the interior to destroy the Seneca towns.

Down the St. Lawrence crept the fleet, past the Thousand Islands and out into Ontario's blue expanse. On July 10 the army encamped at Pultneyville and the next day neared the sand bar east of Sea Breeze just as the sails of the western party were sighted off Charlotte. The timing of the joint expedition had been perfect.

The French and their cohorts landed without opposition although in the forest Seneca scouts were watching their every move. Denonville encamped at the bay, built a palisaded fort and sunk his boats in the shallow water so that they would not drift out to sea. Leaving a garrison of 400 men at the bay, on July 12 he began his march along the Irondequoit Creek, camping at Float Bridge the first night.

The next day amid merciless heat, the invaders forded

Allen's Creek near East Avenue and headed for Pittsford. Then they followed the line of the present Barge Canal to a point beyond Bushnell's Basin where they swung south over the hills to the valley where Victor stands today. They followed the Seneca trail all the way.

A mile south of Victor was the invaders' objective, the big town of Gannagaro on Boughton Hill. The Indians there were waiting for the foe. They had sent the women into the fields to create the illusion that the raid was unexpected. But in a swampy thicket below the foot of the hill two groups of some 800 Senecas crouched in silent ambush.

As the vanguard of the French army reached a brook, the dreaded Seneca war whoop sounded and musket fire raked the allied ranks. Then out from the thicket leaped the painted, yelling Senecas, tomahawks aloft. There ensued a fierce hand-to-hand combat with clubbed musket, sword and hatchet. The French ranks broke and some of the Ottawa Indian allies fled but the Christian Mohawks under Kryn held fast. For a few minutes the Keepers of the Western Door had victory in their grasp.

The Marquis Denonville was a seasoned warrior although that day he was hardly a martial figure, clad in his underwear because of the blazing heat. He ordered the kettle drums to roll and the trumpets to sound. He rallied his army, sword in hand, and through a flanking movement, routed the outnumbered Senecas who fled in disorder.

The next day he entered the Indian village and found the houses in ashes but the storehouses untouched. The French burned them and tore down the palisades of the fort nearby. That fort, which the Senecas did not use, was on a

round hill and ideally situated for defense, as the visitor to Fort Hill may discern today. While their Indians prowled the woods looking for stray Senecas, the French gorged themselves on wild fowl, pigs and green corn. Some of them suffered from dysentery.

Denonville, unopposed, destroyed the other towns, the prison village near East Bloomfield; the large town at Rochester Junction and the settlement near Lima. The troops cut down the standing corn with their swords and burned the stored crops. They leveled the bark chapels the French Jesuits had built. The priests had been recalled prior to the invasion.

Their mission accomplished, the expedition marched back to Irondequoit Bay, camping overnight at "three pretty little lakes," as a trooper recorded in his journal. That was Mendon Ponds Park.

After sending his sick and wounded to Kingston by boat, Denonville burned his fort at Irondequoit Bay and set off for Niagara. Hardly had his sails been lost to view than the Iroquois, who had been gathering their forces for an attack, swept down on the bay, to find the French fort smoking embers and the invader departed.

At Niagara the French built a wooden fort, sensing the strategic importance of that site which was destined to play so large a part in the long struggle for colonial empire. Then Denonville went back to Montreal, leaving a garrison of 100 at Niagara.

His seeming triumph turned out to be a hollow one. The Senecas, heavy of heart but not dismayed over the destruction of their villages and crops, built new towns. Those who had lived at Rochester Junction moved to the Dann's Corners

area near Honeoye Falls. That later village was wiped out by an epidemic in 1715. The Senecas of the other villages moved to new sites around Canandaigua and Seneca Lakes.

They vowed vengeance on the French and sent raiding bands to the French settlements in Canada, even to the very gates of Montreal. After the Denonville invasion, until the 18th Century, no French priest dared set foot in Seneca country. The Jesuits had been generally well received by the Senecas and had made some headway in their attempt to Christianize the Indians, especially among the former Hurons and other defeated peoples among the Senecas. But all their good work was nullified by the Denonville expedition.

Besides the Senecas suspected the French of political motives in sending the priests among them. The Black Robes sometimes brought the white men's diseases into the forest villages and they carted many converts off to Canada, which did not please the Senecas.

The priests who braved death and hardship in the wilderness left valuable records in their carefully written Jesuit Relations and the sites of the old Seneca towns have given up many a rosary and crucifix to tell of the Black Robes who labored among the tribes in a distant time.

The Denonville expedition was historically important in that it steered the Iroquois toward the British camp and thereby helped decide the destiny of the English-speaking peoples in America.

* * *

The dawn of the 18th Century found the Senecas master of a large domain, secure against tribal foes and with great

military prestige, yet perplexed and torn between the ambitious schemes of two empires, France and England.

The Senecas liked the French as individuals. The French were a convivial people who mingled freely with the Indians, while the English were supercilious in their dealings with the Iroquois. The French seemed only to want trade routes while the English lusted for land. But the Senecas did not trust the French, who had allied themselves with the Hurons and who had sent an invading army into the Seneca homeland. So they leaned toward the English—as a matter of political policy.

Under the Treaty of Utrecht, signed by France and England in 1711, it was agreed that the British should have authority over the Five Nations. The Iroquois did not recognize that authority and the English were astute enough to pursue a conciliatory policy toward the League.

A diplomatic Frenchman, Louis Thomas Joncaire, for half a century exerted a strong influence with the Senecas. In 1692 he had been of a party of 12 captured by the Senecas and taken to their town near Honeoye Falls. He was tied to the torture stake where a chief began burning the Frenchman's feet with a red hot gun barrel. Joncaire pulled one hand loose from his thongs, struck the Indian full in the face and knocked him down. That delighted the Indians and for five years he was one of them, learning their customs and language and finally being adopted into the Nation.

Joncaire became the representative of France among the Indians and he served his country well. He played a leading part in the struggle for Niagara, which controlled the water route to Canada. The English wanted that outpost desper-

ately. Through Joncaire's influence, the Iroquois allowed the French to build a stone fort at Niagara, part of which still stands. The English retaliated by building a fort at Oswego, another strategic position on Lake Ontario. Joncaire died in 1739 but two of his sons carried on his work after him.

Then a new figure appeared to advance the British cause and to become a power among the Indians. That was Sir William Johnson, the lord of the Mohawk Valley, who was made British superintendent of Indian affairs, largely because of his friendship with the Mohawks. He enlisted the Iroquois on the English side in the war with the French and in 1759 he led the successful siege of Fort Niagara. That same year Quebec fell to the Redcoats and with it fell New France. The English were firmly in the saddle and henceforth the Indians must reckon with them.

In 1764 Sir William assembled 2,000 Iroquois, most of them Senecas, at Niagara and acquired from them for the British Crown, a strip of land, four miles wide on either bank of the Niagara for its entire length, along with other territory. The portage road around the falls became a bone of contention. The Senecas believed it was on their land and to emphasize their point, ambushed and attacked a British wagon train, killing a score of Englishmen, at a point on the portage road called the Devil's Hole.

That difficulty was smoothed over and through the years Sir William Johnson was able to hold the confidence and loyalty of the Six Nations, aided by his able lieutenant, the Mohawk, Joseph Brant.

The years between the end of the French War and the American Revolution were halcyon ones for the Senecas. As

Cornplanter, a Chief of the Senecas, Mighty on the Warpath, Sage at the Council Fire.

The Splendor of Nature in the Land of the Senecas—Genesee Canyon in Letchworth State Park.

Mary Jemison recalled, "the implement of war was not known nor the war whoop sounded save on days of festivity . . . at peace with themselves and with their neighboring whites, although there were none at that time very near, our Indians lived quietly and peaceably at home."

But not all the Senecas lived at peace with their white neighbors. In 1769 Sir William Johnson was called to his Western New York headquarters at what is now Geneva to hear the protests of the Senecas against outrages by white settlers along the Susquehanna.

The shadow of the Revolutionary War in which those same white settlers were to take up arms against the British King already was hanging across the land, the Revolution that Sir William Johnson did not live to see, for he died in 1774 in his great baronial hall at Johnstown.

The Iroquois, the forest people who had followed him with loyal affection, sadly needed his counsel when the great storm burst upon the land in the year of 1775.

Chapter 10

"The Whirlwind"

"Then a darker, drearier vision
Passed before me, vague and cloudlike.
I beheld the nations scattered
Like the cloud rack of a tempest.
Like the withered leaves of autumn."
From "The Song of Hiawatha."

It took the Senecas a long time to get into the American Revolutionary War and then they were virtually pushed into the "whirlwind" as they called it.

The beginning of the war between the colonists and the mother country in 1775 found them bewildered over the issues and divided in their allegiance.

The Six Nations were not united. Eventually all save the Oneidas and the Tuscaroras joined the British camp. The Senecas hesitated. They were torn between their long friendship with the English which Sir William Johnson had so carefully built up and their affection for such true friends as Philip Schuyler and the Rev. Samuel Kirkland, the Protestant missionary who had labored among them. Still they could not forget that some white settlers had raided Indian villages and slain and pillaged on the border.

The colonists only asked that the Senecas remain neutral. An influential Seneca chief, Big Tree, a friend of George Washington, strove to keep them from a British alliance. The women of the Nation, who had never voted for war in any council, wanted peace. But there were young hotbloods who were eager for the warpath.

The British used every persuasion to draw them to their banner. John Johnson, son of and successor to the late Sir William, and Brant, the Mohawk leader, invited them to councils at which presents were given and lavish promises made.

In 1778 the Seneca leaders were invited, with their brothers of other nations, to watch the British take Fort Stanwix. They were to be onlookers, as at a fiesta. All they had to do was to sit and smoke their pipes while the well trained British made monkeys of the raw colonial recruits.

However, as Mary Jemison related in after years, "instead of smoking and looking on, they were obliged to fight for their lives and at the end of the battle they were completely beaten. . . . Our Indians had 36 killed and a great number wounded."

Contrary to expectations it was the backwoods general Herkimer who humbled the haughty St. Leger.

After that the die was cast. The Keepers of the Western Door thirsted to avenge their dead. The Old King at Kanadesaga (Geneva) was induced to lead his men into battle under the British flag.

There followed grim chapters in Revolutionary history, the raids on American settlements in the Cherry and Wyoming Valleys, in which the Indians, led by Tories, butchered

the whites with savage ferocity. Bands of Senecas and Rangers under the infamous John and Walter Butler and Joseph Brant spread terror over the thinly settled frontier. The crops of the Seneca fields helped feed the soldiers of the King.

Washington, commander of the American forces, determined to end this Redskin-Redcoat menace on the frontier and in 1779, when rebel fortunes were at a low ebb, ordered an expedition into the heart of the Indian country under General John Sullivan of New Hampshire, an experienced and resolute campaigner. Sullivan's orders were specific: "To carry the war to the heart of the Six Nations and to cut off their settlements, destroy the next year's crops and do every other mischief which time and circumstances will permit."

The Sullivan Expedition was no minor border foray. It was one of the most extensive—and expensive—campaigns of the war. It engaged 5,000 American troops, most of them veterans, and it cost the impoverished colonies a million dollars.

It was split into three divisions. The main force, led by Sullivan, was to come up the Susquehanna; another under General James Clinton was to approach by the Mohawk Valley and the third under Colonel Brodhead was to march from Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh). Sullivan and Clinton finally effected a union in July at Tioga but Brodhead never reached the main body. He did some effective raiding, however, on Indian towns along the Allegheny.

The path of Sullivan's destroying army has been traced in an earlier chapter—how his 5,000 met 1,500 Indians and Tories in battle at the bend of the Chemung at Newtown, near Elmira, and put them to flight through superior num-

bers and fire power—how thereafter, unopposed, he marched through the land of the Senecas, around the Finger Lakes, over the hills, past the smaller upland lakes to the banks of the Genesee.

Sullivan destroyed every town along his route, burned the crops and hacked down the orchards. The smoke of their burning villages rose high that early autumn of 1779 as the beaten Senecas retreated before the dogged advance of the weary, hungry and ragged colonists. Sullivan's army never came to grips with the enemy after the battle at Newtown—except for the ambuscade west of Conesus Lake, near Gray's Corners and then it was 600 Tory-Senecas against 26 Americans.

The 26 were members of a scouting party under Lieutenant Thomas Boyd, who were trapped in a ravine and cut off from their army. Fifteen died on the spot. Boyd and Private Michael Parker were taken to Little Beard's Town, where, after they had refused to divulge Sullivan's campaign plans and despite the Masonic signal of distress that Boyd flashed to Brant, a fellow Mason, the two young Americans were fiendishly tortured to death.

Today there's a marker at the tree near Cuylerville where they perished, a plain shaft on a hill above the scene of the ambuscade and some tombstones in the Revolutionary plot in Rochester's Mount Hope Cemetery to tell of the only engagement of the War for Independence fought on Genesee Country soil.

The day after the Boyd-Parker tragedy, Sullivan's troops burned the deserted Genesee Castle of Chief Little Beard. Their general declared his objective had been attained and

the campaign was over. His men retraced their steps through a devastated land of the Senecas.

The effects of the Sullivan Expedition were manifold. The Senecas had been soundly beaten and forced into hiding at Fort Niagara. The Seneca power had been broken. The menace of border massacre had been eased. A vast territory had been won at little cost of life and colonial morale had been boosted in a trying time.

Above all Sullivan's weary, ragged, hungry volunteer army had blazed the trail for settlement. His troopers remembered the rich promise of the land they had ravished, the corn fields and the orchards, the rushing streams and the long blue lakes, the openings in the forest where the wild grass waved in the river bottoms. A decade later, after the Revolution, they returned to the Finger Lakes and the Genesee Country as settlers. Then

"In the woodlands rang their axes,
Smoked their towns in all the valleys,
Over all the lakes and rivers
Rushed their great canoes of thunder."

* * *

Sullivan's men, inexorably following the retreating Senecas and their allies, noticed that the tops of many trees had been twisted along the trail. The Senecas had given defiant notice that they intended to return to their homeland. The twisted tree tops were symbolic. The violence of the whirlwind (the Revolution) may have shaken the Nation but it had not uprooted it. The Senecas still had faith in the

power of British arms. They felt confident the rebels would be beaten in the end.

Into Fort Niagara, the English bastion of the frontier, the Seneca men, women and children flocked, taxing its space and cutting deeply into its scanty rations. At Fort Niagara the council fire of the Iroquois burned after the colonists had fired the Long House on Onondaga Lake. From Niagara mixed bands of Indians and Tories went out to raid the settlements to the westward. The British offered a bounty for American scalps and prisoners.

As early as 1780 the English began locating the Seneca fugitives at new settlements along Buffalo, Tonawanda and Cattaraugus Creeks, Lake Erie and the Allegheny River. Some of the Nation went back to the Genesee, to the towns spared by Sullivan's torch, among them Canawaugus, Squawkie Hill, Big Tree and Caneadea.

The trump of doom had sounded for the Keepers of the Western Door but they did not realize it. They still dreamed that their beloved hunting grounds would be restored to them.

Then in 1781 came the surrender of the Redcoats under Cornwallis at Yorktown and the peace treaty two years later. In that pact the British made no provision for their Indian allies but left them entirely at the mercy of the victorious rebels.

Under all the rules of war, the new republic could have evicted the Indians as a conquered people and confiscated their lands. Luckily the Iroquois had a powerful friend in George Washington who insisted that they be treated justly, that they be paid for their lands under treaty agreements

and that they be allowed to retain as much of their homeland as possible. The Mohawks were excepted from this policy. They had carried the torch for the British too ardently and most of that Nation followed Brant into exile in Canada.

In 1784 a council of the chiefs of the Iroquois nations and of the Thirteen Fires, as the Indians called the United States, was held at Fort Stanwix, the same place where only six years before the Senecas had been pushed into the war. It was the first treaty ever signed between the Federal Government and the Indians.

It set up new western boundaries and stripped the Indians of large slices of their western lands. Red Jacket opposed the treaty with all the force of his impassioned oratory. Cornplanter urged its acceptance as the best possible bargain that could be made. His view prevailed although only a minority of the Seneca leaders signed the pact.

In all their negotiations with the white men at the council fires the Indians bore themselves with dignity and pride. Never did they come as supplicants or as servile members of a beaten race.

Their discontent over the provisions of the Fort Stanwix treaty steadily mounted and Washington did his best to mollify the Indians. Many conferences were held at Fort Stanwix and at one of them a chief of the Onondagas expressed the fears of his people in this manner:

He sat down on a log beside George Clinton, governor of New York. Without a word he began to crowd Clinton. Politely the portly governor moved along the log. The chief continued his shoving tactics. Finally when he had been

pushed nearly off the end of the log, Clinton demanded an explanation. The chief replied impassively: "Just so white man crowd Indian off lands. Keep crowding. By and by Indian clear off end."

During that troubled treaty time Cornplanter addressed Washington in more formal terms in a speech:

"When your army entered the country of the Six Nations, we called you town destroyer and to this day when that name is mentioned, our women look behind them and turn pale and our children cling close to the necks of their mothers. Our councillors and our warriors are men and need not be afraid but their hearts are grieved with the fears of women and children and desire that they may be buried so deep as to be heard no more. When you gave us peace, we called you father because you promised to secure us possession of our lands. Do this and as long as the lands remain, that beloved name will live in the heart of every Seneca."

The Senecas knew Washington was their true friend and they amended an immutable law of their faith that no white man should ever enter the Indian heaven. They made a special place for George Washington in their land beyond the skies. But no other white man will ever be allowed to enter.

* * *

In 1787 the Senecas became unwitting dupes in an ambitious scheme of private speculators to grab the Indian lands and to found a new commonwealth in Western New York. It went down in history as the Long Lease Conspiracy. An influential group, that included John Livingston, Maj. Peter Schuyler and Dr. Caleb Benton, organized the

New York Genesee Land Company as the first step in the plot. As purchase of lands from the Indians was forbidden by state law, the speculators moved to obtain leases from the Red Men. A Canadian wing of the conspiracy took shape, with the infamous Tory, John Butler, as a leader. Representatives of the two groups met with the Six Nations leaders at Kanadesaga and leased for 999 years and for a yearly annual rental all the lands of the Indians.

Governor Clinton got wind of the scheme and hastened to thwart it. He told the Indians they had been duped and had no right to lease their lands. The next session of the State Legislature declared the leases illegal and empowered the government to use force if needed to prevent consummation of the plot.

The secessionist leaders circulated petitions in Otsego, Tioga, Herkimer and Ontario Counties for the organization of the new state. The proposal was decisively repudiated in Ontario County, which then embraced all of the present Western New York and the Long Lease Conspiracy was dead. The Senecas had had a taste of the greed and duplicity they were to encounter among the land speculators of the palefaces.

Little did they know that long ago two different British kings had through two separate royal grants given away the Indian domain. One grant was to the colony of Massachusetts and the other was to the Duke of York. Thus the claims of the Bay State and of New York were in conflict over territory the Indians had always believed was their own.

The dispute was settled at the Hartford Convention of 1786 by which Massachusetts surrendered its sovereignty over the territory and New York gave the Bay State the right

of pre-emption (the right to sell subject to the Indian titles) all the land lying west of a line drawn southward of Sodus Bay and known as the Pre-emption Line. Today there's a Pre-emption Road near Geneva that follows the old boundary line.

Massachusetts lost no time in availing herself of her right to sell the land. It was bought in April, 1788 by two New England speculators, Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham. In July at Buffalo Creek the Indian leaders relinquished to Phelps and Gorham their title to 2,600,000 acres, nearly all of which lay east of the Genesee, for $5,000 and an annuity of $500 forever.

Meanwhile discontent burned in Seneca hearts over the terms of the Fort Stanwix treaty and Washington sent Timothy Pickering to Western New York to settle the Indian claims. Pickering was a giant of a man, dignified and just, who soon won the confidence of the chiefs. He met them in council at Tioga, Newtown and other places and heard Red Jacket, Farmer's Brother, Little Billy, Fish Carrier and others plead the Seneca case.

A delegation of chiefs were taken to Philadelphia where they were wined and dined and given presents. Pickering only wanted to show his good faith and to insure the friendship of the Indians. One elderly chief ate and drank so much he died from overindulgence.

In 1794 Pickering called at Canandaigua a grand council which would dispose forever of the Indian problem. The Senecas came to the council fire in no humble mood. British agents had been among them, seeking to foment discord. Western Indians were on the warpath and even while the

council fire was being lighted at Canandaigua, the raw new capital of the frontier, the Senecas were hopefully waiting word of an Indian victory in the West. A Tuscarora runner came with news of disaster. The American general, "Mad Anthony" Wayne, had defeated their western brothers at Fallen Timbers in Ohio territory.

After that the treaty-making gained momentum. Again Red Jacket raised his voice to demand that no more Indian lands be lost, not one inch of territory east of the Ohio River. The calmer words of Cornplanter and Farmer's Brothers prevailed. The Senecas agreed to new boundaries and gave up the Ohio land.

The scene at Canandaigua during the treaty-making is described in Turner's "History of the Phelps and Gorham Purchase" through the eyes of an early resident of the village:

"As it was known that Colonel Pickering would come prepared to give them a grand feast and distribute among them a large amount of money and clothing, the Indian attendance was very general. For weeks before the treaty they were arriving in squads from all of their villages and constructing their camps in the woods, upon the lake shore and around the Court House Square. The little village of whites was invested, overrun with the wild natives. It seemed as if they had deserted all their villages and transferred even their old men, women and children to the feast, the carousal and the place of gifts.

"The night scenes were wild and picturesque; their camp fires lighting up the forest and their whoops and yells creat-

ing a sense of novelty, not unmingled with fear. . . . At first all was peace and quiet and beeves had been slaughtered sufficient to supply them all with meat, and liquor had been carefully excluded. But an avaricious liquor dealer secretly dealt out the means of intoxication and the council was interrupted and many of the Indians became troublesome and riotous. General Chapin (a Canandaigua pioneer and a power among the Senecas) suppressed the liquor shop, harmony was restored and the treaty concluded, the gifts were dispensed. A general carousal followed but no outrages were committed. The Indians lingered for weeks after the council, displaying their new bracelets, broadcloths, blankets and brooches."

The treaty, which was signed against this raffish backdrop, was of historic importance. It was the basic treaty between the United States and the Senecas and its terms have never been abrogated. It confirmed the Phelps and Gorham Purchase, settled the Indian claims, with the proviso that "the United States will never disturb the Seneca Nation."

Today a boulder on the grounds of the stately Court House in Canandaigua marks the signing of the treaty. In the city's Wood Memorial Library and Museum is a faded old parchment, always kept under lock and key. It is the Indians' copy of the original Pickering treaty and it bears the names of famous chiefs, Red Jacket, Cornplanter, Farmer's Brother, Handsome Lake, Little Beard, Fish Carrier, among them. Each signed with a cross.

Three years later, in 1797, another grand council was convened at Big Tree, west of Geneseo, on meadowlands under

a giant oak. Its object was to extinguish the Indian title to the territory west of the Genesee which Robert Morris had already sold, without the Indians' knowledge, to the Dutch capitalists of the Holland Land Company.

Thomas Morris represented his father, the financier of the Revolution, at the Big Tree council. Jeremiah Wadsworth, whose nephews, James and William, had bought many acres in the Genesee Valley, came from Connecticut as a commissioner for the United States, along with William Shepherd of Massachusetts.

The flower of the Indian oratory corps was on hand and the speeches were long, flowery and sometimes contentious. Red Jacket, as usual, opposed yielding any more Seneca land. Farmer's Brother joined him. Cornplanter was in his accustomed role as a compromiser. In the end, after much haggling during which the council fire was extinguished by Red Jacket, the old Indian domain west of the Genesee, the reservations excepted, were sold for $100,000 under a treaty signed Sept. 15, 1797.

It came out later that some of the influential chiefs were paid for their part in negotiating the agreement. Cornplanter was said to have received $250 a year during his lifetime for his services at Big Tree. Little Billy was paid an annuity of $100 a year. Even the intransigent Red Jacket received his $100 annually.

The reservations alloted under the pact were:

Big Tree, near Geneseo, two square miles.

Little Beard's, south of Big Tree, two square miles.

Squawkie Hill, two square miles.

Gardeau, along the Genesee High Banks, 17,000 acres.

Caneadea, 2 miles wide and eight miles long along the Genesee.

Buffalo Creek, 130 square miles.

Tonawanda, 70 square miles, along Tonawanda Creek.

Cattaraugus, 17 miles along Cattaraugus Creek.

Allegany, a strip 40 miles long and a mile wide on either side of the Allegheny River.

Canadaway, a small tract along Lake Erie in Chautauqua County.

These lands represented only a tiny fraction of the once vast territory of the Senecas but they believed that with the signing of this treaty, they could live in peace on their reservations and adapt themselves to a new and cramped way of life, surrounded by the new settlements of the ever pushing white pioneers. They thought that when the white man promised that "The Seneca Nation would never be disturbed" that he meant what he said. They were to be disillusioned.

* * *

The year 1838 saw written into the dark history of the white man's relations with the conquered Indians one of its basest chapters. It was a dishonorable and conscienceless attempt on the part of the Ogden Land Company to grab all the reservation lands of the Senecas and to relocate the Indians on territory secured from western tribes.

The Seneca chiefs were cajoled, threatened, bribed and plied with firewater but never did a majority of them sign any agreement with the Ogden promoters. Finally in desperation, land company agents took a few Indians, none of

them legal representatives of the Nation, to a tavern at Buffalo Creek, declared them to be chiefs and through liberal bribes and the use of liquor, obtained their signatures. The names of Tonawanda chiefs were forged to this document.

The Ogden people had political influence in high places. The fraudulent treaty was rushed to Washington and ratified by the United States Senate. The Quakers and other high minded citizens, shocked at the brazen deal, sprang to the Senecas' defense. A representative of the Nation, Two Guns, journeyed to the capital by stage coach with a petition of protest signed by hundreds of his people. Ogden spies followed him and stole the satchel containing the petition.

The Quakers kept up the fight to save the Indian lands. There is a little anecdote concerning one of the Friends, Griffith Cooper of Williamson. Cooper visited his friend, Martin Van Buren, then President, in the White House and protested the iniquity of the steal. Van Buren said: "But, Griffith, the white people need that land." The gentle Cooper replied: "Thou knowest that is not so, Martin." But the foxy Van Buren did not lift a finger to help the Indians. Like many of his successors in the White House, he labored only in vineyards where the votes grew thickest.

The Indians and their Quaker allies kept up the battle until by an amended treaty of 1842, the Senecas got back the Allegany and Cattaraugus Reservations. The Tonawandas were dispossessed. In 1856, after the Ogden Company had vainly tried to evict them, they bought back one tenth of their erstwhile holdings, land which had been fraudulently sold for 20 cents an acre. They had to pay $20 an acre for it.

The part they recovered is the present Tonawanda Reservation.

They lost forever the Buffalo Creek Reserve, with a potential value of millions for part of the city of Buffalo stands on it today. There also were buried Red Jacket, Farmer's Brother and other chiefs.

By that time the other reservations set aside by the earlier treaties had been abandoned and the Indian titles extinguished. No longer did the Seneca dwell on his ancestral acres at Caneadea, Canawaugus, Squawkie Hill, Big Tree and Gardeau.

Through an oversight the Oil Spring Reservation, the square mile of wild land on which bubbles the Seneca Oil Spring, was omitted from the Big Tree Treaty. The government has always recognized the Indians' claim to it, however, and until a decade ago, a few Senecas were living on the tiny reservation. The Oil Spring has a high place in the traditions of the Nation. Before the advent of the white man in the early 17th Century, the medicinal qualities of the oil were widely known among the tribes. In pioneer times the Indians gathered the oil by spreading blankets over the surface of the spring and wringing out of the blankets the oil they had soaked up. They caught the liquid in vessels, transferred it to small vials and bartered it with the white settlers who sold it in drug stores as "Seneca Oil."

The heirs of the Ogden promoters still claim pre-emptive right to the Cattaraugus and Allegany Reservations and the courts have upheld their contention. So if the land is ever to be sold, the Ogden heirs have the first option to purchase it.

The Senecas have never forgotten that ancient wrong.

Down through the generations the tale of the white man's duplicity and greed have been told.

The Indians served creditably in the War of 1812 and they scrupulously kept the terms of the treaties. They deserved better treatment than that they received from land speculators and the Great White Father a century ago.

The strength of the non-Christian party on the reservations dates back to the Ogden swindle, which kindled their distrust of all the white man's ways.

At that the Senecas generally fared better at the hands of the pale-faces than did their brothers of the plains who were constantly driven from their reservations, sometimes at the point of the bayonet—whenever the white man coveted their acres or fancied mineral wealth might be hidden under Indian soil.

The story of American-Indian relations is not the brightest page in the history of this nation.

Chapter 11

Of Chiefs and a Crusader

Ask any man on the street or any school child to name a famous Seneca and the odds are 16 to 1 the answer will be "Red Jacket!"

There were scores of greater warriors than he. He was only a minor chief and not of the august council of sachems. In his later years he was dissolute in his habits. Yet he exerted a great influence over his people for years after the Revolution and the white treaty makers found him a power to be respected. His name has lived in history while those of mighty warriors and sachems have long been forgotten.

For Red Jacket was a great orator. Some have called him the greatest of all Indian orators. He was a shrewd and logical debater and could hold his own at the council fire or in the court room against any white man, although he could neither read nor write. He was a potent agitator, with all the arts of the skilled orator, who ever extolled the might and glory of his Nation and fought against white encroachment on the Indian lands. His people did not always follow him but instead they often heeded the calmer counsel of compromisers like Cornplanter.

Picturesque people are always the best remembered. And Red Jacket was as picturesque as his name. Red Jacket was not his real name at all. His Indian names were Sa-go-ye-wat-

hah, which meant "he keeps them awake" and Otetiana, "always ready." Those names became him, too, for no one slept while Red Jacket spoke and he was always ready to loose the flood gates of his oratory.

The white men named him Red Jacket because of the richly embroidered scarlet coat he always wore. A British officer gave him his first red jacket as a reward for his fleetness as a messenger in his youth. After that garment wore out, Red Jacket got another and he wore a red coat as long as he lived. There was no more distinctive figure on the frontier and every settlement knew the erect man of medium build, always proudly wearing his red jacket and the medal that Washington had given him; this man with the flashing eye, the mobile features and the pendulous lip of the spellbinder who so often was under the influence of firewater.

Red Jacket was born at Canoga near Cayuga Lake around 1750. Part of his boyhood was spent on Keuka Lake near Branchport. When he was a lad, he attended a great council of the tribes along the Shenandoah and there heard the famous Mingo orator, Logan, speak. The matchless oratory enthralled the boy and he was fired with an absorbing ambition. He would be another Logan.

Back home his mother would miss him from their cabin and when she asked him where he had been, he would answer: "Out in the woods, playing Logan." So it was the birds and the woods animals along Keuka's shores that first heard the golden voice that was to resound at a hundred council fires.

Red Jacket was with the broken Indian-Tory army that retreated before the advance of Sullivan's "Town Destroy-

ers" and it is said that when the Seneca chief, Farmer's Brother, wanted to make a stand at Canandaigua, Red Jacket counseled continued flight and Farmer's Brother in bitter words accused him of cowardice.

After the Revolution his voice was heard at every treaty council. At Fort Stanwix and at Tioga he opposed with all the force of his impassioned eloquence the ceding of Indian territory to the Thirteen Fires, as he called the United States. At both councils Cornplanter's more moderate views prevailed. Red Jacket sought to keep inviolate the Seneca power and the Seneca homeland.

He liked to match wits with Washington's representative, tall Timothy Pickering, and at Tioga and Canandaigua held his own. He tried to make Pickering lose his temper and make some unguarded statement and sometimes he succeeded, although the big Yankee was an able diplomat and was well liked and respected by the Indians who called Pickering "Sunny Side of the Hill."

Later when he was told Pickering had been made Secretary of War, he mused: "We began our public careers about the same time. He knew how to read and write. I did not and he got ahead of me. But if I had known how to read and write, I would have got ahead of him."

Modesty was not one of Red Jacket's traits.

He was wont to use graphic examples at councils to drive home his points. At the Canandaigua treaty making, he filled two benches, one with nine Indians and a lone white man at the end; the other with nine white men and a single Indian, to illustrate the change in the status of the two peoples after the Revolution.

Then he arose to speak and the assemblage listened to a magnificent voice declaiming:

"We stand as a small island in the midst of great waters. The wild spirit rides upon the blast and the waters are disturbed. They rise; they press upon us. And the waves are settled over us . . . and we disappear forever."

At the Treaty of Big Tree Red Jacket was a thorn in the sides of the white negotiators and once extinguished the council fire although he had no authority to do so. He was obdurate in his opposition to granting a large tract to Mary Jemison, the White Woman, but he was overruled.

Red Jacket refused to speak the English language and insisted on conversing with whites only through an interpreter although he knew most of the English words. He resisted all efforts of "The Black Coats" to convert him to the Christian faith. Once he told a young missionary: "If you white people murdered the Saviour, make it up for yourselves. We had nothing to do with it. Had he come among us we would have treated him better."

Red Jacket once defended an Indian accused of murder. Pitted against him in the Canandaigua court room was a rising white prosecutor. Red Jacket's eloquence so stirred the jury that his client was acquitted. His rival was so chagrined that he never again appeared in any court and exclaimed in his bitterness: "If a heathen Redskin can so bewitch man's reason, what excuse is there for either argument or law?"

When Red Jacket went with other chiefs to Philadelphia after the Fort Stanwix Treaty to present the Indian grievances to George Washington, the President gave him a silver medal which the orator wore around his neck, night and

day. The tale is told that when in 1795 the French Duke de Liancourt was touring the frontier, he expressed a desire to see the noted orator of the tribes. He was told he had already seen Red Jacket but did not recognize the Indian with the medal around his neck, asleep in a ditch along the trail at Avon, as the Demosthenes of the Senecas, ditched by too much firewater.

Another tale has Red Jacket, exhilarated by drink, pitting his voice against the thunder of the Sheququa Falls, the tumbling waters that splash down almost into the principal street of the village of Montour Falls.

Judge Augustus Porter, the pioneer surveyor-landowner and the founder of the city of Niagara Falls, was a friend of Red Jacket, who, with another Indian, had helped him survey a tract between Seneca Lake and the Niagara. Red Jacket was welcomed at the Porter homestead but like all other Indian visitors, he was made to drink a large quantity of water before he was allowed one drink of liquor.

In 1818 when Judge Porter was having a bridge built to Goat Island, Red Jacket, after watching the engineering tactics for a while, stamped away, muttering sadly: "The damn Yankees. The damn Yankees." It was his admission that his people could never cope with the ingenuity and enterprise of the whites.

Red Jacket distinguished himself in the War of 1812, fighting against his old allies, the British. He was in the thick of action with other Senecas at Fort George, scene of an American victory in 1813.

The orator's last days were spent at Buffalo Creek, where he died in 1830. He was buried on the Reservation there but

later his bones were reinterred in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo where today a fine monument marks the grave of the silver tongued Seneca of the scarlet coat and the silver medal.

* * *

One summer around 1730 a white trader came from Albany to the land of the Senecas. His name was John O'Bail and at the Indian village of Canawaugus on the Genesee, he became enamored of a Seneca maiden. A son was born of that forest romance but the white trader returned to his home in the East and the white man's ways and the young mother reared their son in the Indian way without his white father's help.

The boy, who was fairer of skin than this playmates, was named Ga-yant-hawah-geh, meaning "at the planted field." Under the name of Cornplanter he became one of the wisest and most influential of Seneca chieftains and a veteran of many wars.

During the Revolution after he had gained eminence as a chief and a warrior, he led an Indian raiding party to a cabin near Fort Plain on the Mohawk. There two white prisoners were taken. Cornplanter, who had planned the raid, knew the older of the two captives but the old man with the white hair did not know the leader of the Indian band.

Fearfully the old white man followed the chief to a secluded spot along the river. There they were alone and the younger man spoke in a kindly voice to his prisoner, who had expected to be tortured:

"My name is John O'Bail, commonly called Cornplanter. I am your son. You are my father. You are now my prisoner

and subject to the customs of Indian warfare but you shall not be harmed. You need not fear. I am a warrior. Many are the scalps I have taken. Many prisoners have I tortured to death. I was anxious to see you and greet you in friendliness. I went to your cabin and took you by force. But your life shall be spared. Indians love their friends and their kindred and treat them with kindness. If now you choose to follow the fortunes of your yellow son and live with our people, I will cherish your old age with plenty of venison and you shall live easy, but if it is your choice to return to your fields and live with your white children, I will send a party of my young men to conduct you in safety. I respect you, my father. You have been friendly to Indians and they are your friends."

Old John O'Bail chose to return to his white children and Cornplanter, the son whom he had not recognized, provided the escort just as he had promised.

That incident, which may be apocryphal but was told by Mary Jemison, is only a sidelight in the long and action-crammed career of Cornplanter of Canawaugus. His was a name to conjure with in the Seneca hierarchy. He was but little inferior to Red Jacket as an orator and ranked high above him as a warrior. He was a power at the council fires and his wisdom and moderation often saved his people from too hasty action.

Cornplanter was somewhat jealous of the younger Red Jacket's renown as an orator and once when Red Jacket was boasting about his speeches at the council fires, the older chief said curtly: "Yes, but we told you what to say."

As a young man Cornplanter took part in the French-Indian war and was at Braddock's famous defeat in Penn-

sylvania, along with a young Virginia officer he was to know well in later years. The Virginian was George Washington. During the Revolution, Cornplanter was a staunch ally of the British.

He was a man of medium height, inclined a bit to corpulency, with a dark and penetrating eye and an easy manner in any company. He carried the treaties and other papers of the Nation around with him in his saddle bags and was looked upon by his people as an authority in governmental matters.

His early years were spent in the Genesee Valley. In 1756 he was living at Kanadesaga (Geneva) with a white wife and several children. In later life he lived along the Allegheny in the wild and mountainous reservation of that name. He died in 1832 at the great age of 96.

The State of Pennsylvania granted two square miles of land just over the New York State line from the Allegany Reservation to Cornplanter and his descendants forever. On that Cornplanter Reserve still dwell a handful of the clan of Cornplanter, a numerous and interesting one in the story of the Senecas.

* * *

Canawaugus on the Genesee had another distinguished native son. His Indian name was Ga-ne-o-di-yo but to this day he is revered in Seneca hearts as Handsome Lake, "The Peace Prophet." He was a half brother of Cornplanter but there was no white blood in his veins.

Handsome Lake was destined to affect the lives of his people far more than any orator or statesman. He was the Savonarola of the tribes, without being a martyr. He was a

prophet, a reformer, the founder of a new religion which augmented the ancient faith and above all, a crusader for temperance.

Handsome Lake was born in 1735 and he was a sachem of the highest rank, a member of the Turtle Clan. For years he was a shiftless idler and a drunkard. Then around the year 1800, as he lay on a hillside near Canawaugus sleeping off a debauch, four young angels came to him in a vision. They commanded him to go out among his people, preaching the evils of intemperance and exhorting them to return to the faith and ways of their fathers, for the Great Spirit was angry with them for their excesses.

From that day forth Handsome Lake was dedicated to his mission. He spent the rest of his days spreading the new gospel whose keynote was temperance, although he taught the other moral virtues. He saw clearly how the white man's firewater was debasing his people. Astutely he played on their religious traditions and superstitions as he traveled from village to village, like Jesus of old, winning many converts.

He was modest and quiet in his demeanor and his religious zeal was tempered with tolerance and kindliness. Often he was called upon to heal the sick. He saved many a tribesman from a drunkard's grave. And the Peace Prophet, more than any other, arrested the spread of Christianity among the Indians.

Handsome Lake was on a preaching mission at Onondaga when he died in 1815. The preservation of the ancient religious rites of the Senecas on the reservations today and the strength of the non-Christian party there are due largely to

the crusade 150 years ago of this gentle, utterless selfless man, who went out among his people, seeking only to save them from the evil ways.

* * *

There's a little stream that winds through the lowlands down Cuylerville-Leicester way. A roadside sign tells the traveler that here is Little Beard's Creek.

Thus is the name of a Seneca chief, powerful in his time, perpetuated in his old realm in the Genesee Country. Little Beard lived near what is now Cuylerville and there before the Revolution stood the most important stronghold of the Senecas, known as Genesee Castle or Little Beard's Town. It was to this town that the Indians and their Tory leaders dragged the captured soldiers of Sullivan's army, Boyd and Parker, to be tortured to death. It was this big town that Sullivan wiped out as the finale of his campaign. After the Revolution, a tract there was set aside as the Little Beard Reservation.

Little Beard had a reputation for cruelty and ferocity in battle but in peace he was described as amiable and he made friends with the white settlers after the war. He was a fluent speaker although not a great orator and was influential at the council fire. He was a straight and slender man of medium height.

He came to an ignoble end. During a drunken brawl in a Leicester tavern in 1808, the chief was thrown out the door and sustained mortal injuries. A few days after his death, there was an eclipse of the sun, something that generation of Indians had never seen. They were terrified and assembled,

beating their drums and singing. Believing that the spirit of Little Beard, on its way up the heavenly path, had obscured the sun, they shot their bullets and arrows skyward until the brightness was restored.

Also in the Genesee Valley, in a town that bore his name on the river southwest of Geneseo, lived a chief named Big Tree, who was a useful friend of Washington and the Americans and an important Seneca.

In 1778 Washington sent Big Tree to the Indian towns in an effort to enlist them on the colonies' side but his work went for naught when a spy spread the word of the proposed Yankee invasion among the Senecas. In 1791 Big Tree was given an island in the Allegheny River by the Great White Father but he never lived to claim it. In 1792 when he went to Philadelphia with other chiefs for a parley, he died suddenly, possibly of too much food and drink.

The name of Big Tree is remembered because of the treaty signed at his old town in 1797 under a great oak tree.

A potent sachem of the Senecas was Farmer's Brother, a tall, well built, dignified figure, an orator and a warrior, who often stood with Red Jacket, whom he had once taunted with cowardice, at the councils fighting for justice to his people.

Farmer's Brother at Tioga led the protest of chiefs who charged Oliver Phelps with breaking the promise made at Buffalo Creek to pay $10,000 for the Indian lands. Phelps insisted the price agreed upon was $5,000 and he produced depositions of white witnesses to prove his claim. The Indians also contended some of their leaders had signed the document under influence of firewater. This also Phelps

denied. Farmer's Brother stood again with Red Jacket at Big Tree to demand concessions from Thomas Morris in the treaty making.

At the Old Castle of Kanadesaga, there ruled a mighty chief with the Indian name of Sayenquerhaghtha, better known as "The Old King" or "Old Smoke." He was a humane and able administrator and a friend of the Rev. Samuel Kirkland, the missionary, and other Americans. But he could be terrible in war. After the rout of the Indians and British at Fort Stanwix, Molly Brant, the Mohawk widow of Sir William Johnson, came to him, pleading in the name of his dead friend, the lord of Johnson Hall, that the "Old King" join the British colors. He yielded and led his warriors to the massacre at Wyoming and aided the Red Coats throughout the Revolution.

A woman of beauty and dignity was Catherine Montour, who ruled at French Catherine's Town by the tumbling waters, now Montour Falls. Strange mixed blood ran in her veins. Her great grandfather was a French emigrant to Canada who married a Huron wife. Her grandmother was Madame Montour, adopted as a girl by the French governor, Frontenac, and wedded to an Oneida chief. Her mother was "French Margaret," the wife of a Mohawk. Her sister was "Queen Esther" who was called "The Fiend of Wyoming" because she reputedly took part in that massacre and wielded hatchet and firebrand with her warriors.

Catherine married a Seneca chief, Thomas Hudson, and they lived near Tioga. After Hudson's death, his widow lived for a time at Kanisteo Castle before she came to rule over

Shequaga, "tumbling waters," which became known far and wide as French Catherine's Town. When Sullivan's raiders neared her village, Catherine was for making a stand but the other Senecas and British advised flight—and the Yankees burned her "palace" along with the rest of the village.

She fled to Fort Niagara and after the Revolution, went with the chiefs to the Philadelphia powwow that cost Big Tree his life. There her beauty excited much comment. She died in Canada.

The name Montour occurs often in frontier history. In 1788 we find Capt. Andrew Montour, under orders of Sir William Johnson, leading a party to destroy Kanisteo, on the present site of Canisteo village, a vipers' nest of the lawless of all races. And white pioneers well remembered John Montour, son of Queen Catherine, who lived at Big Tree after the Revolution in which he fought on the British side. At Fort Niagara he suffered an ulceration of the lower lip, caused by food poisoning, which left his jaw and teeth exposed and gave him a ferocious appearance, although he was a mild mannered Indian. He possessed some knowledge of medicine. He was fatally injured during a fight with another Indian on a spree. So many Senecas died that way in the post-Revolutionary days. John Montour was buried in the blue broadcloth suit of which he had been so proud.

A chief with the picturesque name of Hot Bread was a leader at Canawaugus. He was short and swarthy and a fine speaker but indolent and a glutton. Red Jacket once said of him: "Hot Bread big man here" pointing to stomach, "small man here," indicating head. Hot Bread is said to have

drafted the chiefs' memorial to the Governor of New York, protesting against sending the Christian missionaries, "The Black Coats," among them.

The memorial read: "We ask our brothers not to force a strange religion upon us. We ask to be let alone and like the white people, to worship the Great Spirit as we think best. We shall then be happy in filling the little space in life left us and shall go down to our fathers in peace."

Tall Chief lived at Squawkie Hill and on Murray Hill near Mount Morris, and was senatorial in his bearing, with a strong resemblance to Henry Clay. He possessed a secret Indian remedy for rattlesnake bite and was sent for from far and near to use it and it generally worked. Which recalls that Rochester's "Rattlesnake Pete" Gruber, who many years after achieved a similar renown, got his secret from the Indians of his native Pennsylvania. Tall Chief died around 1830 at Tonawanda.

He had a son named Straight Back. The most interesting thing about him is an incident that occurred in the early days of Hornell. A pioneer named Benjamin Crosby once invited Straight Back to dinner in his cabin and served the meal in courses. Straight Back returned the invitation and also served his dinner in courses. Every course was the same—succotash.

There were many other chiefs with picturesque names, such as Little Billy, Fish Carrier, Clear Sky, Half Town, Two Guns, Shongo—and many of those names still persist among the Senecas who live on the reservations that are so thinly spread over the land that once belonged to the Keepers of the Western Door.

Quiet Beauty in the Old Indian Land
—Irondequoit Bay, Port of the Senecas.

Modern Senecas of Tonawanda Reservation in Regalia for New Years Festival.

Chapter 12

Captive Children

There were many white pioneers who lived to tell their grandchildren the story of their captivity among the Senecas.

Hundreds of white captives, many of them children, were taken in the border raids prior to and during the Revolution and led into bondage into the Seneca towns. The Indians adopted many of the children as their own and uniformly treated them well. Older white prisoners went unharmed, too—if they showed proper spirit and fortitude in running the savage gauntlet.

Frontier history is sprinkled with piteous tales of captives who through long years sought some trace of their white families and when they were freed after the Revolution, went back to their old homes, to find their loved ones dead and their cabins only ashes.

In 1767, a decade before the Revolution, Sarah Carter, a young white girl taken prisoner in Pennsylvania and brought to one of the Seneca villages along the Genesee, reported that there were 40 Yankee prisoners among the Indians in that region, one of them a big Negro blacksmith working at his trade. This Negro had bought the services of a young Connecticut girl captive for five pounds, a practice of the time.

The elder Doty in his "History of Livingston County" states that two Delawares, Squash Cutter and Long Coat,

made a business of bringing in white prisoners to the Senecas and selling their time to the Indians.

At the beginning of the Revolution, many of these prisoners had been exchanged or released although Sullivan's troopers received a number of white prisoners who had fled after the rout at Newtown and at Kanadesaga they found a little white boy, who could not speak English, wandering about the deserted village.

* * *

Most famous of the white captives in the land of the Senecas was Mary Jemison, "The White Woman of the Genesee," whose strange story is part of the folklore of the land.

She was 16, a shapely lass with golden curls and eyes of Irish blue when in 1758 a mixed band of Indians and Frenchmen raided the Jemison home, in Western Pennsylvania, butchered her parents and led her away into bondage.

The Indians were kind to her. They replaced her tattered dress with Indian garb and put moccasins on her tiny feet. At Fort Pitt Mary was given to two Seneca sisters who had lost a brother in battle.

Gradually she began to forget the ways of her own people and to live in the Indian fashion. But she never completely mastered the Indian language. Her captors would not allow her to speak English but, as she recalled in her old age, she repeated to herself the prayers her mother had taught her and never forgot her own language.

Mary married a young Delaware and he was brave and kind. A boy was born to them, fair skinned like his mother.

With that papoose strapped upon her back the young wife walked 300 miles from the Ohio country to a new home on the Genesee called Little Beard's Town. Three tribesmen accompanied her. They slept on the ground under the stars wherever night overtook them. The baby was only nine months old. Mary's husband was to join her on the Genesee but soon word came that he was dead.

It was decreed that the young widow marry again and her new husband was Hiokatoo, a warrior chief, six feet tall and 36 years her senior. He lived past the century mark and their wedded life was a happy one. Six children were born to them.

After the Senecas cast their lot with the British in the Revolution, Mary's cabin on the Genesee housed some noted guests, among them the Tory Butlers and Joseph Brant, and she had to pound corn from morn to night. Another visitor was Ebenezer (Indian) Allen, the Tory who was to become the first white settler on the site of Rochester. When Sullivan's army marched to the Genesee, Mary fled to Fort Niagara with the rest of the inhabitants of Beard's Town.

The next Fall she returned to the Genesee and found shelter at Gardeau near the High Banks, which was to be her home for many years. White settlers came and learned the strange story of her long captivity. One of them, Dr. James E. Seaver, put her story in a book, a rare volume today and valuable as a first-hand account of life among the Senecas.

When she was given the opportunity to return to her own people, Mary Jemison chose to stay with the Indians. She had lived their life so long. She kept to the Indian ways as long

as she lived, always sitting on the floor rather than on a chair and wearing the Seneca garb.

At the Big Tree Treaty the White Woman was granted a large tract at Gardeau along the High Banks of the Genesee and there she lived for more than 30 years. She made friends with the pioneers and helped preserve amity between them and the Indians.

In 1831 she left the Genesee Country for a new home at Buffalo Creek. She was an old lady then and her hair was snow white but still curly. She walked quickly but with a stoop because she had worked so many hours in the fields and carried so many babies strapped upon her back. Her Irish eyes were faded and tired—for she had seen much sorrow. Three of her sons had met violent deaths and Mary Jemison railed at the white men who sold firewater to the Indians.

At the age of 89 the White Woman went back to the Christian faith of her girlhood. She had never forgotten the prayers her mother taught her. She died in 1833 at Buffalo Creek and was buried there.

Forty-one years later her bones were brought back to the Genesee and today over her grave in Letchworth State Park beside the singing falls and the great gorge, the White Woman stands in sculptored stone, her baby strapped upon her back, just as in that faraway time when she first came, a young bride, to the Valley of the Genesee.

* * *

When Horatio Jones was a red haired, grey-eyed, slender lad of 17 in his native Pennsylvania, he joined up with a

company of rangers in the army that was in revolt against the British King. That was in 1780.

He had not been a soldier long before his scouting party of 17 men was surrounded and surprised by a body of Indians in the woods along the Juniata. Nine were killed and eight were taken captive, Horatio Jones among them. But he was caught only after a long chase because he was strong and fleet of foot and without fear.

Through the woods the Indians led their captives to the village of Caneadea on the Upper Genesee. All along the way young Jones had endured punishment and hardship without complaint and helped carry the burden of a fellow captive, who was old and feeble. The Senecas eyed him with favor but he must pass a final test if his life was to be spared. He must run the gauntlet at the council house at Caneadea.

It was trial by missile. Hatchets, arrows, clubs, knives and stones were thrown by yelling Indians at Jones as he ran toward the goal. He escaped with only a few bruises and after that he was a favorite of the Senecas.

During his capitivity he was adopted into the Nation, assumed the Indian dress, learned the Indian language and won the complete respect of his captors. He would tolerate no insults from them. Once when an Indian thrust a mass of roots into his face, Jones struck his tormenter in the nose so savagely that the Indian was disfigured for life. An Indian chief who threw tomahawks at Jones had to cry quits because Jones caught every hatchet deftly and sent them back whizzing past the Seneca's head. He was cool, fearless and of great strength and those were qualities the Red Men admired.

After the Revolution, Jones lived for a time at Seneca Lake before settling in the Geneseo region. He had great influence with the Senecas and often arbitrated their disputes with the whites. He was made official interpreter on important missions with the Indians in Washington and the orator, Red Jacket, preferred Jones above all others as his interpreter.

Horatio Jones was commissioned by the government to carry the money from Canandaigua to Buffalo Creek that was to be paid the Indians for their lands. It was a large sum and in specie. He knew the danger of that mission, alone, on horseback, through the forest. Armed with tomahawk and scalping knife, he mounted his horse with this final direction: "If I am murdered you will find the money 20 rods northwest of where I sleep."

Jones made his destination but not without incident. He awoke one night under the stars with the feeling he was being spied upon and arose from his lonely camp fire at dawn. He had not gone far down the trail when an Indian sprang out from some bushes, brandishing a club. Jones spurred his horse and was soon out of danger. As he looked back over his shoulder, he saw in an opening a kettle above a blazing fire. He always believed that had he been captured, he would have been consigned to that kettle.

This Daniel Boone of the Western New York frontier died in 1836 and is buried in Geneseo.

* * *

In the old city of Canandaigua there's a street named Parrish. It honors a bold frontiersman who for six years was a prisoner of the Indians.

Jasper Parrish was only 11 years old when in 1778 he was captured by Munsee Indians, along with his father who was helping a white family move into a new home in the backwoods of Pennsylvania near the Delaware River. The father was taken to Fort Niagara and the boy delivered to a village on the Delaware. Some young Indians beat and tormented the white lad at first but after he had shown pluck and fortitude, he was well treated. To inure their boy captive to the cold, the Indians made him strip in the dead of winter and plunge into the icy waters of the river.

Parrish was with the Indians when Sullivan routed them at Newtown. He was taken to Fort Niagara where he narrowly escaped being scalped by a brave, greedy for bounty money. When he was released at the close of hostilities, he had been with the Indians so long he had nearly forgotten his own language and went back to school to make up his lost education.

Like Horatio Jones, he became a valuable liaison man between the Indians and the whites. He acted as interpreter for Pickering at the treaty fires and later was an official of the Indian Department. As an interpreter, bearer of messages and diplomat, he was constantly on the move. He was a familiar figure at all the powwows, at Philadelphia, Buffalo Creek, Canandaigua, Onondaga, wherever there was dealing with the Indians.

Always he remembered the kindness the Indians had shown him when he was their captive and he was their staunch and trusted friend in the troubled days after the Revolution.

The Indians did not forget their friends, for in 1798, they

asked the New York Legislature to grant Jasper Parrish and Horatio Jones a tract of land along the Niagara near Black Rock. Farmer's Brother, spokesman for the Senecas, eulogized the pair in this fashion:

"As the whirlwind (the Revolution) was so directed as to throw into our arms two of your children, we adopted them into our families and made them our children. We loved them and nourished them. They lived with us many years. Then they left us. We wished them to return and promised to each a tract of land and now we wish to fulfill the promise we made them and reward them for their services."

The Seneca's eloquence was wasted. They did not get the land although both were rewarded by their own government in other ways.

Jasper Parrish died in 1836 in Canandaigua and sleeps in the old Pioneer Cemetery there.

* * *

Moses Van Campen, soldier of the Revolution, scout, woodsman, who twice was taken prisoner by the Indians, was another almost fabulous figure of the frontier, who in his old age became a patriarch of the Genesee Country.

Van Campen was a schoolmate and comrade-in-arms of the ill fated Lieutenant Boyd who was tortured to death at Cuylerville during the Sullivan invasion. Like Horatio Jones, he ran the cruel gauntlet at Caneadea Council House and with like success.

Indian women armed with clubs, whips and knives lined the 30 yards that Van Campen had to run. The white prisoner was fleet and young and crafty and he ducked and

dodged his way, almost unscathed, to within a few feet of his goal. In his path stood only two women, weapons poised to descend upon the bared back of the white man. Van Campen charged them like a football player. He sent one sprawling with the straight arm technique. He lashed out and kicked the other in the belly and she joined her comrade on the ground. The Indians roared with laughter and ever after held Moses Van Campen in high regard.

He was a valued aide of Charles Williamson in that land promoter's development of the Genesee Country and was friend and associate of the wealthy Philip Church, the pioneer of Allegany County who built at Belvidere the manor house that still stands beside the Genesee.

Van Campen spent his later years in Angelica and Dansville. He was a venerated figure at patriotic gatherings. But there is no record that he was a negotiator between the Indians and the white men. He never expressed any great liking for the Redskins. Maybe Moses Van Campen never forgot the fate of his friend, Thomas Boyd.

Chapter 13

"The Indian Summer" of the Nation

Poetess Sigourney was exercising the license of her craft when long ago she wrote that "all have passed away, the noble race and brave."

The Senecas are by no means a vanished race. There were 3,333 of them living on three New York State reservations when the 1940 census was taken. The federal count of noses next year is likely to reveal at least 4,000 as the Indian birth rate has been steadily ascending for years. And there are hundreds of the Seneca blood who do not live on the reservations.

The three reservations of the Senecas in Western New York, insignificant little patches on the vast domain that once belonged to the Keepers of the Western Door, are the Cattaraugus, with a population of 1,643; the Allegany with 1,151, and the Tonawanda with 539 (1940 census).

On those reservations you will find a fascinating mixture of the modern and the long ago. The three Western New York reservations are much alike, save for size and topography.

Let's take a look first at the Tonawanda Reservation, named for the creek of that name (in flood times it's a mighty river) that winds through its 7,548 acres in Genesee and Erie Counties, between the white man's cities of Roches-

ter and Buffalo. The reserve extends from the hamlet of Basom, 13 miles northwest of Batavia, on the east, to the outskirts of Akron, on the west.

Most of the reservation is second growth timber and underbrush, with the Indian homes in the clearings, just as in the olden time. Along the winding roads stand many log houses, little different from those Sullivan burned in 1779, among the frame houses, some of them as modern as your own. Nearly all have well groomed lawns. Most of them have small but flourishing gardens.

Nearly every Indian home has a garage and you see shiny automobiles, most of them the latest models. And from one house, a well kept frame dwelling, rises the unmistakable symbol of the Atomic Age, the antennae of a television set. Indians may cling to some of the old ways but they like modern gadgets. The man who owns the television set has many callers in the evening.

There are small grade schools on the reservation but most of the children attend the schools in Akron.

Most of the reservation men work in the gypsum mines at Oakfield or Akron and in Batavia and Buffalo factories. Some hire out to nearby farmers. Few till their own land. Large tracts are rented out to canneries.

Tonawanda claims the distinction of being the first Indian Reservation in the United States to have its own Community Center. The Great White Father, in the guise of WPA, built the imposing two-story structure of cypress planks, with fieldstone foundation and chimneys, that stands just outside the reservation near Akron on land bought by the Indians and leased to the state. It was dedicated in 1937.

The guardian angel of the project was a white woman, Mrs. Walter A. Hendricks of Penn Yan, for many years a friend of the Senecas, particularly the Tonawandas. She saw the crying need for a community meeting place with proper recreational facilities and interested influential people in the idea, among them the then Governor of New York, Herbert Lehman, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt and Dr. Arthur C. Parker, then director of the Rochester Museum.

Work began in 1935 and the Indians helped build their center. The fireplaces they constructed are superior in craftsmanship and design to those the white men built.

The center contains a huge, modern gymnasium and a good sized stage, with a curtain on which is painted the symbolic history of the Iroquois. Indian talent has produced plays and pageants there. The center has a movie screen but needs a projector.

The state maintains a health clinic at the center where a nurse and physician minister to the ills of the reservation two days a week. Hanover Spring, the pleasant middle-aged custodian of the center, well versed in the lore of his people, proudly shows the visitor the World War II honor roll in a first floor lobby. There are 138 names on it. Five Seneca soldiers never came back to the banks of the Tonawanda Creek.

The Center houses an arts and crafts room, where many reservation Indians have developed latent talents; a dining hall, kitchen, library and meeting rooms for the reservation's American Legion post. The Community Center, which is operated under the State Department of Welfare and governed by a board of reservation residents, is just what its name implies.

The Tonawanda Senecas are grateful to the woman who inspired its building and who has been their true friend in so many ways through so many years. Mrs. Henricks was adopted into the Nation and given the name of "Se-nee-weh," a title clan name, which is a great honor. The name means "She who overcame obstacles." The gracious lady from Penn Yan overcame many an obstacle before her dream of a Community Center took shape on the flats near Akron. She is one of the very few white persons or non-members ever admitted to a session of the secret society, the Grand Medicine Lodge of the All Night Song.

The Indians have many diversions not connected with the Center. They are enthusiastic over their baseball and lacrosse teams, which compete with athletes from the other reservations and from nearby villages. The Home Bureau has been of great help to the Indian women. More and more the reservation people are adopting modern ways.

On the Tonawanda Reservation there is a certain bridge that is a sort of "Mason-Dixon line." On one side of it live the Christian Indians. On the other, in the land called "Down Below," dwell the non-Christians, the followers of the ancient faiths and of the religion of Handsome Lake.

In "Down Below" stands the Long House or Council House, a frame building, with a big stove at either end, benches along the sides and a big open space in the center. There the seasonal festivals, the ages-old dances and ceremonials are held. There Seneca women perform the trotting dance with their infants and even 2 and 3-year olds in their arms, so that from babyhood the young Seneca gets an idea of rhythm.

On the surface it seems as if the clock had been turned back centuries. Yet it is not exactly as in the olden time. Then men did not dance the ancient dances in rubber boots and overalls nor women in slacks. Nor did they play bingo in the Long House, although Indians always have been inveterate gamblers.

The Christian Indians have three churches on the reservation, the frame Methodist in its coat of gleaming white; the brick Baptist Church with its graveyard in the rear, where flags wave above soldier graves, and the weather-beaten Presbyterian, which was founded by the missionary, Asher Wright, the originator of the Seneca Bible and hymn book.

The Christian party is in the majority on the three reservations. Possibly the non-Christian group is proportionately stronger on the Tonawanda than on the others. It must be remembered that the Tonawanda Senecas lost the most in the nefarious Ogden land deal and maybe distrust of the white man and his ways is rooted deeper there.

One who knows the Indians well made this comment on the hold the old traditions have upon the people:

"It is fascinating to see a complete Baptist Indian funeral closed with solemn hymn singing and then see the preacher depart quietly after a Biblical blessing and leave them alone with their dead, whereupon they (the same Baptist Indians) stay right there and go on with the ages-old ritual of the dead, the songs, the food for the departed—just in case."

And even the Christian Indians have to go to the Long House "Down Below" to receive their first Indian names. A new name, under the Seneca custom, is given at adolescence.

Politically the Tonawandas are divided also. The Catta-

raugus and Allegany Indians are incorporated and a joint body under the name of the Seneca Nation of Indians. The Tonawandas are a separate entity, under the name of the Tonawanda Band.

The Band has two councils, two political parties. The so-called Progressives, who elect their council, is the one recognized by the Government. The other faction adheres to the ancient system of clans and hereditary sachems. Holding the title of grand sachem of the Tonawandas, by virtue of his chieftainship in the Wolf Clan, is Freeman Johnson, who lives in Rochester and is a clothing factory employe there.

Sidelights of the Tonawanda Reservation, the land of "Down Below" and "Across the Bridge" . . . ; "Getting lost" on the winding roads and asking the way . . . of the white farm woman whose home, it turned out, was just outside the reservation line and who "didn't know anything about them Indians" . . . the big Indian who was getting a drink of water at a pump in his front yard and who so politely answered all questions about directions but who, when pumped about other matters, summarily ended the conversation by lowering his face into his dipper of water . . . the older Indian man who apparently understood no English and answered only with grunts . . . the young woman in slacks "Down Below" who was doing her washing outdoors with a hand wringer, while nearby on the lawn under a tree lay a sleeping black haired baby, guarded by a mongrel dog, and one thought how in the old days that baby would be swinging from a tree limb in a hammock-like carrier . . . the two talented artists on the reservation, Jesse Cornplanter, heir to a famous Seneca name, whose delightful book, "Legends of

the Long House," is illustrated with his own sketches . . . and Nicodemus Bailey, descendant of Chief Little Billy, and a producer of Indian plays and pageants . . . the bolts of cloth in the Community Center, that for the first time since the Pickering Treaty of 1794, were to be distributed by the Indians themselves, instead of by agents of the Great White Father, for there is no longer an Indian superintendent and the Indian agency has been closed.

* * *

And now the trail swings southwest to the Cattaraugus and the reservation on its banks that bears its name, the most populous of the three Seneca reserves. Its 21,680 acres lie in three counties, Cattaraugus, Erie and Chautauqua and extend from the Gowanda-Collins area on the east to Lake Erie.

Although it is surrounded by a rich farming countryside, there is little cultivated land on the reservation. The Cattaraugus Indians, who are partners with their Allegany brethren, receive annuities from the natural gas wells the white men discovered and operate on the Indian land. Most of the males on the Cattaraugus Reservation work in industry in Buffalo, Gowanda, Irving or other nearby communities. Few of them till their tax-free land.

That situation is deplored by the kindly man who has been a resident Protestant missionary on the Reservation for 25 years, the Rev. David W. Owl. Of Cherokee stock from North Carolina and a graduate of the old Rochester Theological Seminary, the Rev. Mr. Owl believes that the salvation of his people lies in their return to the land, a more

healthful and soul-satisfying life than laboring in factories for other people. He is setting an example by working several fields and gardens himself and spoke with pride of one Reservation woman "who is a real farmer and will harvest 90 tons of beans this year" and of another, who has a fine dairy herd, one of the few on the Seneca lands.

During his quarter century on the Reservation, the missionary has seen great development and his people "gradually emerging toward maturity." He sees the liquor habit as the greatest drawback to his people's progress but believes that in time the Indians will conquer that nemesis. It must be borne in mind that firewater was first introduced less than four centuries ago to a forest people who had never before known its taste, by Europeans whose ancestors had been guzzling strong drink for countless generations.

By no means are all Indians intemperate. The Senecas have a temperance society that is one of the oldest in the United States.

Few roads on the reservations are marked and a stranger has trouble finding his way. A quest for the Thomas Indian School brought an unforgettable reply from a young Indian boy, one of a group who had been riding a hay truck. He said: "Up there beyond the crossroads. You can't miss it. Lots of big structures." His face was impassive but his coal-black eyes danced as he rolled out the word "struct—ures."

The Thomas Indian School is an imposing cluster of "structures." It is maintained by the state for Indian orphans and children from broken homes, from kindergarten to high school age, and the boys and girls come from reservations all over the state.

The school's population is about 160, nearly equally divided between the sexes. Besides their classroom studies, the boys work on the 200-acre school farm and in woodworking and other craft shops, and the girls are taught domestic science. The school houses a modern hospital and a health clinic. It has a big swimming pool and other recreational facilities.

Its atmosphere seemed as pleasant and homey as any institution's can be. Many Thomas School graduates have made their mark in the professions, in business and industry.

The school has an interesting history. Back in 1830 the Quakers, ever the friends of the New York State Indians, established an elementary boarding school for Indian girls on the Reservation. In 1845 it was discontinued. The Senecas on the Cattaraugus and Allegany Reservations about that time abandoned their old government by chiefs for the present republic. The new regime attempted to reopen the school but could not raise the needed funds.

In 1854 an Indian died on the Reservation, leaving a large family of children in dire want. An ensuing investigation disclosed some 50 orphaned and destitute children on the Cattaraugus. A missionary couple, who devoted their lives to helping the Indians, sprang to their relief. They were the Rev. Asher Wright and his wife, Laura, who came to the Reservation from Buffalo Creek in 1843.

The Wrights enlisted the sympathy of a wealthy Baltimore Quaker, Philip E. Thomas, who immediately authorized Mrs. Wright to take as many children as possible into the Mission House at his expense, until a school could be built.

Thomas and other friends of the Indians began raising a fund. The state was induced to appropriate $2,000; the federal government chipped in $500 and "The Thomas Asylum for Orphan and Destitute Indian Children," was incorporated. Finally enough money was on hand to start construction. Materials were transported from Buffalo over rough roads by horse and wagon. And in 1856 the first school unit was opened to 10 children. The next year 45 were enrolled.

For 19 years the work was carried on with great difficulty and little funds. In 1875, largely through the interest of William Pryor Letchworth, the Buffalo philanthropist, donor of beautiful Letchworth Park to the state and father of Craig Colony for epileptics, the Thomas Indian School became a state-supported institution.

New buildings were added over the years until the present imposing array of "structures" evolved. Near the school are the flower-decked graves of Asher and Laura Wright, who gave it the spark of life so many years ago.

The Cattaraugus Reservation is the birthplace of Dr. Parker, the authority on Seneca lore, who is a grandnephew of Gen. Ely S. Parker, a full blooded Seneca Indian who was secretary to General Grant in the Civil War and a direct descendant of Red Jacket.

Years ago there was a tribal law that forbade travel by white man on the Cattaraugus Reservation after sundown. It is no longer enforced.

* * *

When Joseph Ellicott, the surveyor of the Holland Land

Purchase, laid out the Allegany Reservation in 1797 after the Treaty of Big Tree, he declared that "five eighths of it is inaccessible and untillable land."

That 30,000 acre strip of Seneca land stretches for 40 miles along the Allegheny River, a mile wide on either side of the stream. The setting is wildly beautiful, with a majestic river winding between folds of green mountains.

But as Ellicott pointed out, the land is poor, save for a few river bottom acres. Still there was good hunting in the woods, good fishing in the river and for many years the Indians lived there, at peace and undisturbed by outside interference.

In 1862, a railroad, the Atlantic and Great Western, now a part of the Erie system, nosed through the Southern Tier. Its right of way ran through the Indian land. At the northern end of the Reservation was a hamlet with the picturesque name of Bucktooth. It lay along the shining new tracks and was renamed Salamanca after the Spanish grandee who was one of the backers of the new railroad.

That little settlement on the Seneca land flourished like a green bay tree. Soon it was a booming center of trade, a maze of railroad yards, a cluster of lumber mills. Clouds of man-made smoke rolled up from the river to join the perpetual haze that hung over the mountain tops.

No treaty maker in 1797 could have foreseen that a bustling city of 10,000 people would spring up on the scraggly acres alloted to the Seneca Nation along the Allegheny.

A curious situation arose. Salamanca people did not actually own the land on which they built their business blocks, their factories, their homes. They could only lease it from

the real owners, the Indians. There was much legal confusion until in 1892 a 99-year lease contract was negotiated between representatives of the Seneca Nation and of the city of Salamanca. This fixed the rentals to be paid the Indians annually. Because they were united in one republic, the Senecas on the Cattaraugus Reservation had an equal stake in the Salamanca leases with their Allegany brethren.

As time went on, some Salamancans became careless about paying their rent to the Indians. More property fell into arrears. The Senecas grew restive about these lapses but did little about it. Also many of the Indians felt that the rentals fixed in 1892 were inadequate and that their representatives who signed that lease agreement had been outmaneuvered by the white men.

Salamancans went about their business, annoyed that they had to pay, on top of the federal, state and local taxes, money to the Indians for the privilege of living on land which they themselves had beautified and improved.

In 1939 a vigorous new party came into power on the Reservation. The elections in the Seneca republic sometimes are hard-fought ones. The Seneca Council cancelled all leases in default. The United States government, as the legal guardian of the reservation Indians, brought suit for recovery and at the same time demanded a new form of lease with a higher rental, based on 2½ per cent of the assessed valuation.

Salamanca fought back in the courts. The Indians have a saying: "Salamanca never gives up." Be that as it may, the Southern Tier city has produced some able lawyers and politicians.

But Salamanca lost this battle. In a test case the Federal courts ruled that the laws of New York State did not apply to the Indian reservations. That decision in 1943 broke the back of the Salamanca defense, based on the state landlord and tenant law which provides that tender of back rental nullifies any action for recovery.

In 1943 a joint state legislative commission began a study of Indian affairs and conducted a series of hearings on reservations throughout the state. Because the Salamanca lease controversy was still hanging fire, the first two hearings were held in that city. This writer attended both hearings, conducted in the City Hall—on the Indian land.

There was tension in the air. The Indians marshaled their best talent to the witness stand—the late Wilford Crouse, then president of the Nation; fiery Cornelius Seneca, a leader of the Cattaraugus group, and sage Roy Jimerson, also of Cattaraugus. Their position was summed up thus:

"We want only what belongs to us. The white man did not pay his rent. He did not keep his word. This is no business of the state's anyhow."

Carrying the Salamanca banner was a distinguished figure, Judge Thomas H. Dowd, who died in 1953 at the age of 93. He was the last survivor of the group that negotiated the leases of 1892.

Judge Dowd told how the white man had built a busy city out of his own efforts where had been only a swamp; how Salamanca stood ready to pay every dollar of arrears; how the decision of the court had injured the city's credit and the value of its real estate. He advocated legislation to solve the problem.

Since then oil has been poured on the troubled waters of the Allegheny. The peace pipe has been smoked. The lease difficulty has been settled, with both sides making concessions. The delinquents have signed the new leases with the higher rental. The language of the state rent laws has been written into the new compact.

This Salamanca situation is unique in America, a bustling city of 10,000, a railroad and manufacturing center, on land granted "forever to the Seneca Nation of Indians."

There are, as a prominent Salamancan pointed out to me, "two sides to the Salamanca story."

And there has been legislation, as Judge Dowd urged in 1943.

For years the state courts had no jurisdiction on the reservations. Only the federal officials could make criminal arrests. In 1947 legislation was enacted giving the state police and the state courts power in such cases.

On the Cattaraugus Reservation there's an old frame building. On it is a sign "Court House of the Seneca Nation." For 150 years the Indians maintained their own "Peacemaker's court," to adjudicate civil difficulties. In the 1949 session of Congress, a bill was passed, giving the State of New York jurisdiction in civil proceedings.

Many Senecas opposed this measure and some of them went to Washington to protest against it at Congressional hearings. The law provides for preservation of "tribal laws and customs" and stipulates that "nothing herein contained shall be construed as authorizing the alienation from any Indian nation, tribe or band of Indians of any lands within any Indian reservation in the State of New York" or sub-

jection of any such lands "to taxation for state or local purposes."

Those provisos were inserted to quell the deep-seated fear in many an Indian heart that somehow, someday they will lose their tax-free lands. So many remember the stories their fathers have told them of the Ogden land deal and other greedy attempts to grasp the Indian land. There were those who saw in the new legislation an opening wedge toward complete state control. And that group had greater faith in the Great White Father in Washington than in the Empire State.

Yet "the Great White Father of the Forty-Eight Fires" whose council house is in Washington, is moving toward granting more and more self government to his Indian children. The Indian agency at Buffalo was closed seven years ago, and the Indian office at Salamanca followed suit. The post of Indian superintendent has been abolished.

Allowing the Senecas for the first time to distribute their treaty cloth was a straw in the wind. Now the Indians handle, through their elected treasurer, all the moneys due them for land leases and other annuities. The experiment in self government will be worth watching.

For there are political feuds among the Indians, as among their white brothers. Often their elections are fought over no particular clear-cut issue, save the desire of the rival groups for power. Yet is that so unlike our own local elections? What great issue has arisen in any recent municipal campaign in Rochester or Buffalo or Mount Morris or Naples (the communities are picked at random), other than a battle of personalities or a desire on the part of the "ins" to stay in and of the "outs" to get in?

Chapter 14

As It Was in the Beginning

We have seen the Senecas in the Springtime of their days when they were young and strong and eager for the fray.

We have seen them in the Summer noonday, the zenith of their power.

We have seen them in the Autumn of their faded glory after their star had set, in the long Indian Summer of their quiescence.

Alas, for many it has been the Winter of their discontent.

For they will always remember that this was the land of their fathers' pride; that they are the heirs of a proud heritage, the Keepers of the Western Door.

With their Oriental-like calm that hides an inner rebellion of the spirit, they have watched the white man go about his empire building on their ancient hunting grounds.

They have seen the white man's axes hew down the forests where the wild deer roamed; the white man's plows tame the old Indian land; his drills go down into the earth to bring up the liquid gold and the other mineral treasures.

They have watched him harness the thunder water where the strange gods dwell and make the rushing waters turn his mill wheels. They have marveled as the white man dared even to chain the lightning of Heno, the Thunder God.

They have seen the white man's Iron Horse and his gasoline wagons rumble over the land; his great birds with engines roar their way across the skies; the smoke of his teeming cities cloud the heavens where once the wild birds swarmed.

They have seen the white man's buildings reaching for the sky; the clatter of his machinery break the silence of the harvest time.

And yet they know there are things the white man cannot change. Those are the eternal things.

The long lakes like fingers glimmer in the sunshine as of yore. The blue inland seas still pound against the rocky shores. The rivers still sing as they course from the mountains to the sea. The great cataracts thunder their mighty music and the little waterfalls tinkle in the glens. The great brooding hills still keep their eternal silent vigil. The woods don their brilliant coat of many colors every Autumn before the moon of the falling leaves.

That is the real Land of the Senecas, in all its unspoiled grace and splendor, as the Master of Life fashioned it, as the Senecas first saw it in days of old.

Did You Know That . . .

The Iroquois Indians set up in the forest a working League of Nations before Columbus discovered America?

The principal highway across New York State follows an old Indian trail?

Seneca women had the right to vote centuries before Susan B. Anthony was born?

Irondequoit Bay once was the great port of the Senecas?

The Senecas had their own "Boy Scout troops"?

And a system of game conservation?

The city of Salamanca stands on land that still belongs to the Seneca Nation?

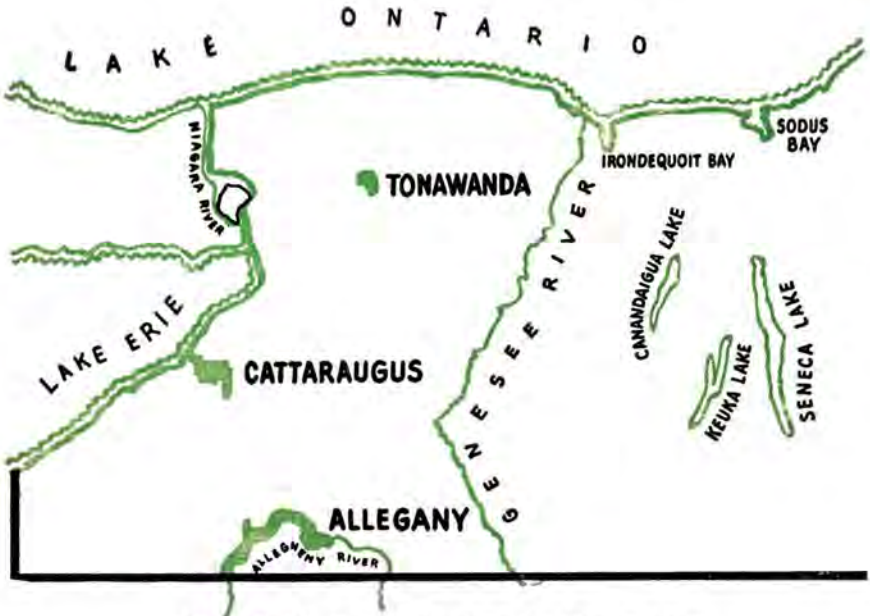
The Indians had the first "apartment houses" in Western New York?

The Seneca orator, Red Jacket, in frontier days defended an Indian accused of murder before a white jury and won his acquittal over a white prosecutor in Canandaigua?

Much of the present teeming South Buffalo once was an Indian reservation?

Indian women broke up the monotony of the day's work with rest periods and music long before modern industry adopted the idea?

The River Campus of the University of Rochester and that of Keuka College stand on the sites of aboriginal Indian villages?



Once all this was the Land of the Senecas. Now only the three reservations — the Tonawanda, the Cattaraugus and the Allegany — are theirs.

THE LAND OF THE SENECAS, known to the red men as Nun-da-wah-ga, (as described by Arch Merrill), was a natural paradise, and so entrancing in its qualities that the soldier and settler, once having seen it, was eager to possess it. The Senecas fully appreciated their incomparable hills, their jewel lakes, their fertile valleys, and their oak openings. It was a wonder land that all men might covet and treasure.

When, at the Treaty of Big Tree this land was wrested from them, (1797) they were crushed. Even then, though impoverished and dispirited they would often leave their shrunken acres and wander over their old town sites to drop flowers and incense upon the graves of their ancestors, nor could they suppress a warrior's tears.

The Senecas of today, whether upon still smaller reservations or as workers in our towns and cities, have become reconciled and now eagerly seek to do their part as constructive citizens endeavoring to build a better world for all mankind.—DR. ARTHUR C. PARKER